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ANNE GREY.

B. BENNEY, PRINTER.

ANNE GREY

A NOVEL.

EDITED BY THE AUTHOR OF "GRANBY."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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ANNE GREY.

CHAPTER I.

THERE had been a small party at Westhorpe (the Dowton's), during Charlotte Daventry's stay there, and it had been, what she probably might call an agreeable visit. She had liked the Foleys, who, as we already know, were there, and had been liked by them, for liking, of course, is mutual. She had liked Mr. Craw-

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ford, Mr. Foley's nephew, who was also of the party.

"Oh! yes," said she to Sophy, "he is very agreeable indeed! He would be just suited to you. He is very clever, and satirical, and tells such droll stories of people."

Frank Crawford was eldest son and heir to Lord Gleddon. He was, as Charlotte Daven-try said, very clever, but he would have been more generally thought agreeable, had not his sarcasms, and his ill-natured stories of his best friends, given a feeling of alarm and insecurity to those who listened to him. He was not an amiable character. Vanity, selfishness, and ill-nature were the prevailing qualities of his mind. It was vanity which made him love his cousin, Isabella Foley. She was a pretty, accomplished, and pleasing girl. She would have a good fortune, and it had always been thought natural by his father that he should marry her.

Frank Crawford did not particularly agree in the propriety of this arrangement ; but vanity told him that Isabella must wish for the alliance : and though he was not in love with her, vanity would not allow him to believe that she could love any but him, or that any should dare to seek to marry her without his permission.

Isabella Foley, a quiet, amiable girl, did love Frank Crawford ; but it was as a cousin. She never thought of him in the light of a lover. Frank Crawford was not sufficiently attached to his cousin to perceive the nature of her feelings towards him, and he was satisfied so long as she preferred no other ; but he would have hated the man whom she could love better than himself.

This, then, is Frank Crawford, whom Charlotte Daventry, good, simple girl, thought so agreeable — to whom she talked a great deal

at Westhorpe, and who talked a great deal to her.

Mrs. and Miss Dashwoods were also there, and one or two others. But the Foleys were the subjects of Charlotte's eulogiums. She loved them all. Mrs. Foley had been so good-natured, and called her 'dear Charlotte,' and had had the tears in her eyes—had actually cried for her, when she said how unhappy she felt the morning they all went to Hilton, and left her. Mr. Foley was so handsome, so polite, so clever, so agreeable!—but as to Isabella!—"she lets me call her Isabella, do you know, already—as to her! no words can express how very charming and delightful she is! She is almost—and indeed I often thought of it when I was there—she is almost like you, Sophy—and Anne."

Anne almost started as this was said so *naively* and innocently. She thought of the

words that had fallen from her lips on the preceding day. "Yes," thought she, "she is thoughtless, and changing in feeling, and swayed by the childish impulse of the moment."

The Foleys had all liked Charlotte Daventry. Mr. Foley had been flattered by her evident admiration, for she was a handsome girl: but Mrs. and Miss Foley had been actuated by a better motive. Mrs. Foley knew that she was an orphan, and felt she must be unhappy, because all orphans were; and that she must be amiable, because all people in affliction were, and especially orphans. So she loved her, and her eyes were often filled with tears for her, and she told Isabella to make a friend of her.

Isabella was very ready to follow her mother's advice. She pitied Charlotte Daventry, for who would not pity the child who has lost

the care and affection which none but a parent can give? Moreover, every now and then, in the midst of her gaiety—there was a touch of sadness—a trace of deep emotion—a tone—a look, that went to the heart; — that bespoke that simple, childish, as her manner was, she felt, and felt deeply.

Isabella sought her friendship, and thought herself more than rewarded by the warmth, the gratitude, and the emotion with which it was received. She found with surprise that Charlotte Daventry had known the want of a friend. She found with surprise that her cousins, too gay and happy themselves, had failed in this office—that they were not the thoughtful, kind, and pitying friends, whom Charlotte had hoped to find in cousins of her own age and sex.

Charlotte Daventry did not complain—she seemed afraid of uttering a word that would

give any one the impression of their want of consideration and affectionate care for her. She seemed grieved if she let fall any thing that could be construed into such an idea ; but it was very easy, in spite of her caution, with an artless, unreserved character such as hers, to discover the truth.

It grieved Isabella Foley to think it was so. She had expected to find pleasant companions, and desirable friends in the Miss Greys. She had liked what she had seen of them, especially what she had seen of Anne. She could more easily believe that Sophy might be heartless—too gay, and devoted to society, to feel or think for others : but of Anne it was less easy to believe such a thing—to believe that she was not good-tempered, that she was envious and jealous. Yet it was impossible not to see that this was the case, from those little things which dropped from Charlotte, and for which she

immediately checked herself, as though aware that what she had said might be interpreted by Miss Foley to her cousin's disadvantage.

For example—Miss Foley remembered perfectly that both Sophy and Anne had said that Charlotte could not play well, and that she disliked music. She perfectly remembered on one occasion, that Anne had prevented her being asked to play, and she had thought at the time her motive was kind; for Charlotte had sat almost within hearing, blushing, and looking distressed, and she had then supposed she was alarmed at the idea of being made to perform; but she could now guess that her embarrassment arose from a different feeling, for it appeared that Charlotte not only loved music, but could play beautifully.

Once or twice when Miss Foley and her cousin were alone in the room with her at Westhorpe, she had sat down to the instrument,

and played with so much expression, brilliancy, and taste, that both Isabella and Frank Crawford were surprized and enraptured.

Charlotte had often exclaimed, after she had been playing, "How I love music! How I love playing—when I am not afraid of being heard," she added with a sigh. "Do you mind my playing, Miss Foley?"

"Indeed, I am delighted with it," said Isabella.

"Oh! but then I had better stop perhaps," looking alarmed and distressed, "unless you will promise not to mention it. Will you promise not to mention it at Weston?" she said very eagerly.

"Certainly, if it is your wish," said Miss Foley.

"Oh! thank you, thank you," with delight, and then seeming to recollect herself, she added, "You know I have no particular

reason—I do not know that they would mind”—and getting confused, “ You know there is no reason to be jealous—that is—” —getting more and more confused, “ I only think, you know, that it is better you should not praise my playing before them—they are so good-natured—so very kind—”

Isabella saw her confusion—her amiable desire to conceal the truth—to unsay or soften it when it had dropped unintentionally. She understood perfectly what Charlotte had tried she should not. She saw that at Weston she was not *allowed* to play well; and she determined to do as Charlotte wished, for peace at home was better than the reputation for accomplishments abroad.

“ Go on, dear Miss Daventry,” said she. “ You need not be afraid either of Frank or me. We will be very discreet.”

“ How very kind you are,” said Charlotte,

as though she felt it from her heart, and the tear that glistened in her eye shewed that she did.

Isabella was touched, and with all her gentleness she was indignant—"How one may be deceived!" thought she, "so simple and quiet in appearance!"

Of the excellent Mr. Grey, also, there was much to be learnt. Charlotte Daventry spoke of her gratitude to him—of his goodness in allowing her to live in his family, and seemed to think it so astonishing an act of kindness: yet Isabella saw that the astonishment arose, not from his kindness being so great, but from there being any kindness from *him*. She saw that she wished to feel all the gratitude she expressed, and to make others think it due, but she perceived that she could not.

In short, from the various things which fell from her in the unguardedness and simplicity

of her nature, Isabella found that there was but little cause for gratitude. She learnt that Mr. Grey had actually refused to take the guardianship—had refused the dying father's last request, till a larger sum of money had been named—till it had been written down and witnessed. She heard also of his indifference—his want of affection and attention to Charlotte ; his hurrying her away from her home—her father's resting-place—because he wanted to attend the sale of some cattle at Weston ! All this had been gathered from what Charlotte had accidentally disclosed. It was distressing to think of so much worldliness, yet she had before heard the Greys slightly taxed with that failing.

William was the only one of the family of whom she heard only praise. He who professed so little—who at times was almost too blunt in his manner—of him Charlotte spoke

with the warmest gratitude. It seemed as though her heart, longing to have something to love and to be grateful to, having hoped and been disappointed, relieved itself in showering all its affection and gratitude where alone it was possible to bestow it.

Isabella Foley's heart fluttered as she heard Charlotte Daventry's expressions of grateful fondness to William, and she thought her still more amiable, and more to be pitied and loved. Isabella Foley was gifted with a warm heart—a little romance—a little of the softness and tenderness of her mother's character. William Grey had already touched that heart, and had awakened a sentiment in her romantic and tender imagination.

Young ladies should certainly never surrender their affections, never be in love till the time when the good, honest, wealthy suitor, has made the offer of his house, hand, and

heart!—when ‘papas’ have said “yes;” and ‘mamas’ agreed:—when the settlements are drawn up—the wedding-ring procured—the wedding-cake prepared and the favours ready made. Then—sensible, discreet, prudent young lady, at that moment surrender your heart—then try to fall in love—and in the attempt find out whether you do or do not like the man who, in a short time, you will swear to love, honour, and obey. Then too, you—good, honest, wealthy suitor, look to find the devoted, affectionate, confiding wife—Yes, look; and if, perchance, in her, the dread, the fear, the knowledge of other men’s deceit, has made you fail to find all this, then do not blame her, the prudent, rational young lady, now your wife; but if you will blame any, blame alone those of your own sex who have taught her these cold lessons of wisdom!

Isabella Foley certainly should not have

fallen in love, and yet, poor foolish girl, so very nearly had she done so, that she loved to hear the praises of William Grey, and pitied Charlotte Daventry ten times as much, because she praised, and was grateful to him. Perhaps Charlotte Daventry perceived that, as his name was mentioned, Isabella became more intent, and listened more eagerly. Perhaps, too, she perceived, that when Isabella had blushed at the name of William Grey, Frank Crawford had looked proud and indignant, and said an angry word to his cousin. Perhaps she did perceive this ; but it matters not to know.

CHAPTER II.

“ So, then, at last, Maria Pemberton is to be married to Frederic Barton !” said Lady Downton, one morning during Charlotte Daventry’s stay at Westhorpe. “ Poor thing ! Miss Barker says it is supposed it will take place in about two months’ time. No one knows why they wait so long. I suppose, my dear,” said she, addressing herself to Charlotte Daventry, “ the marriage of another young friend of mine will soon take place. Mr. Barton’s and his friend

Lord Stoketon's marriage will probably not be far distant? Yes, my dear girl! You need not look so unconscious, for we all know that Lord Stoketon is violently in love with our dear Sophy! Do not attempt to deny it."

"Ah! but, Lady Dowton," said Charlotte, looking very innocent and childish, "that cannot be true, for I heard Sophy laughing at him the other day. She said—oh yes! how she did laugh at him! she was so droll!" and Charlotte laughed at the recollection. "To be sure it is true about his being in love with her. Oh yes! I remember that!" and she laughed again as if with an irrepressible merriment at the idea of the ludicrous picture Sophy had drawn of him.

"My charming girl," said Lady Dowton, quite excited, "do tell us all about it? Here are only the Miss Dashwoods and Mr. Crawford, so you need not mind."

“Oh! dear, I have nothing to tell!” said Charlotte. “But she said he was such a blundering, good-humoured, simpleton, so very dull, and so confident that she must like him! She had such fun humouring him! I do quite long to see him!”

“My dear girl!” said Lady Dowton, “let me see,” thought she, sinking back,—“so she laughed at him, did she?” to Charlotte.

“Oh yes,” said Charlotte.

“Let me see—there will be time to write before dinner—to save the post—I can contradict that report then. He, it seems, is in love, and ridiculed by her. Very shameful, and I had just said it was to be.”

“But then,” continued Charlotte, “I remember once I said to her that I hoped she would never marry Lord Stoketon (because you know people had talked about it) and she was so amusing! pretended to cut me short—said

she did not see why I should hope that—for though Lord Stoketon was a goose, he was rich, and would be a very good match. Was it not droll of her?" said she to Miss Dashwood.

Miss Dashwood did think it droll, not of Sophy Grey to hold such an opinion, but that Charlotte Darenty should not be aware that she was repeating what her cousin could not easily forgive her for having said. "A new hint," thought Lady Dowton. "Sophy tells me," said Charlotte, "that that Mr. Barton you were speaking of was forced into marrying Miss Pemberton; that they were so anxious, that I believe she quite asked him, and he is very good natured, so he did not mind. What an odd way that is of making a person marry one, is not it?" said she, thoughtfully, yet innocently. Frank Crawford smiled and looked at her; and it seemed that Charlotte returned the smile. "Sophy says," continued she, "that Mrs. Pemberton's

temper is so bad ! Oh ! it is so shocking ! and that is the reason that her daughter is so anxious to marry, and though I thought it was strange, Sophy assured me that Miss Pember-ton positively does not at all like Mr. Barton ?”

“ Indeed ! my dear Charlotte, how entertaining you are !” Lady Dowton got out her writing paper. She could resist no longer. She must put it all down for the edification of her dear friend, whilst it was fresh on her mind—but to write in company was difficult, and, retiring with her letter to her room, she there wrote all the scandal she could to wile away the ennui of her dearest friend’s long day.

Miss Dashwoods thought it time to retire with their work, and thus were Frank Crawford and Charlotte Daventry left alone.

“ Excellent, Miss Daventry, you have done it well ! Lady Dowton is a happily deceived woman !”

“ Yes,” said Charlotte, laughing. “ I saw you smile ; I was so near laughing too. It would have spoilt it all ; it was very amusing to give her own story back again—all that Sophy had told me was Lady Dowton’s absurd scandal. It will all be written in that letter to her dear friend as Sophy’s own—the intimate friend of the parties ! undoubted authority ! and how they will laugh at poor Lady Dowton ! About Lord Stoketon too—I did exaggerate a little—but you know that will soon be set right ; so it don’t matter if the Dashwoods did take it for truth. It is so pleasant to have some one to enter into the fun of such a thing : but Mr. Crawford, do not expose me to your cousin.— I believe I am an odd person, am I not ?” said she, throwing up her dark sparkling eyes at him, with an expression that had never yet been seen at Weston.

“ Yes,” said Frank Crawford, “ you are

very odd, and it is for that I like you. Yours is not an ordinary character," and Crawford looked at her with admiration: Charlotte turned away, blushed, and then, sitting down to the piano-forte, sung a lively French song, with such grace, such naiveté, such fascinating coqueterie, that Frank Crawford could not resist the charm.

"What a finished coquette," thought he; and he was going to speak to her—but she was again the demure, uninteresting Charlotte Davenport—she ceased to play—rose from her seat, and walked out of the room.

We have all of us heard a good deal of circulating libraries—of the circulation of books—the circulation of opinions, and the circulation of knowledge. Doctors talk of irregular circulation, and of sluggish circulation—monied men talk of the circulating medium—statesmen talk of the circulation of sedition,—but more won-

derful than all is the circulation of scandal ! Its surprising velocity—the additions it gains in its course—the variety of channels through which it passes—the impossibility of impeding its progress surpasses belief ! No one has told a scandalous tale—no one ever repeats an ill-natured story—every one makes a point of avoiding all gossip—yet, once afloat, it spreads—it circulates—nothing can conceal it, till all that many thousand-eared monster, the world, have heard and known, and wondered, and been satisfied ; and then it falls into a lethargy and dies a natural death. We talk of steam-carriages and rail-ways—and will no one wonder at the power—the velocity of gossip ? Will no one write the natural history of gossip ?

We must now return to Weston. “ My dear Anne,” said Mrs. Grey, at the bottom of the stairs, in a very happy tone, “ here is a letter just come ; one for me, and one for you, which I

have opened. Make haste and come down to answer it. It is from that charming woman Lady Hadley, asking you to go there quite alone—to-morrow, or any day, and to stay as long as you can."

"How very kind," said Anne, quietly as she descended the stairs. "Do you and papa wish me to go?"

"Wish you to go! certainly my dear; to-morrow by all means. But you know, my dear," added Mrs. Grey, considerately, as if accounting for Anne's calmness; "you will be back in time for the Foleys; we will take care of that."

"Oh! thank you, mamma, I was not afraid of that," said Anne; and she was so quiet that Mrs. Grey was obliged to believe her. "If it was any where but Hadley," thought Anne, "I should be very sorry to go from home. But Lady Hadley is so kind, and I love her so

much;" and she smiled sufficiently to please Mrs. Grey, as she sat down to answer the note.

On the morrow Anne went to Hadley: Sophy felt a little envious; "I dare say it will be very pleasant," said she; "I wish she had asked me too. I dare say," after a little pause, "that Mr. Temple will be there!"

"Do you think so?" said Anne, in a very animated tone.

Mrs. Grey was in the room, and she wondered she had not before remembered the barouche-box.

"He might do as well as George Foley, only Chatterton is so near," thought Mrs. Grey; "and he is not a marrying man! No," thought she, "she must come back for Chatterton, even if they are very anxious to keep her, and she can go again perhaps."

CHAPTER III.

ANNE arrived at Hadley about ten minutes before the dressing-bell had rung. The door was opened for her, and as she walked across the large echoing hall, through the large drawing-room, and saw the tall footman stand with the door held open for her at Lady Hadley's morning-room, she felt that even Hadley was a very formidable place, and that Lady Hadley was a very tremendous person: she thought, perhaps, with a sigh, of her snug room at home,

and then walked in. Sophy's predictions were verified ; Mr. Temple was at Hadley, and alone in the room as Anne entered.

I do not know whether Anne looked pleased or not through her blush : I only know that she did blush. She was not sure whether to shake hands, and when Edward Temple held out his, it was held a little time in vain ; however, at last, the hands were shaken, and Edward Temple looked animated, and certainly (as Sir Henry Poynton would have said,) ‘in a very good-humour.’ Anne thought that there was something very delightful in his expression of countenance, and probably her eyes sparkled and her colour brightened, for Edward Temple thought she was certainly very pretty.

“I am glad to see you here again, Miss Grey,” said he. He saw that Anne was shy. “I am delighted to see you here. You know,” said he, “that I must, for the present, take the

character of Lady Hadley. You must endeavour to fancy, for five minutes at least, that you are sitting by Lady Hadley—that she is saying all the civil things on your arrival at her house, and you must say all the proper things in return. You have not yet told me that you are delighted to find yourself here again—that you were afraid you should be too late—that Mrs. Grey desires—what is it? remembrances? love? no, regards is the best word—desires her kind regards, and tells me to thank you for taking me away from her. There, Miss Grey! Is not that exactly what you will have to say to Lady Hadley when she appears? Suppose we rehearse, and then you will be quite perfect? Here am I to personify Lady Hadley! Ah! but here she is herself! Just five minutes too soon. Lady Hadley, Miss Grey,” said he, making a bow as Lady Hadley entered. “Here have Miss Grey and I, for the last half hour, been rehearsing all she is to say to you on your entrance.”

“What nonsense he talks, Miss Grey, does not he?” said Lady Hadley; and then she far exceeded Mr. Temple’s ideas of the cordiality of greeting, for she gave her a kiss, and said, with all that warmth of affection and manner that Anne felt was so charming, how happy she was to have her at Hadley once more.

“There, Lady Hadley!” said Edward Temple, “you dared to say what nonsense I talked! and now, Miss Grey can tell you that the words I used were exactly the same as your own.”

As Lady Hadley took Anne up to her room, Anne felt that she was the very dearest woman in the world, and that the visit to Hadley would be very delightful. Perhaps her thoughts extended a little farther, but we have no right to tell tales. Her eyes, it is true, were rather more bright, and the delicate colour on her cheeks a little more decided than usual; and

when she was dressed for dinner, and had given herself the last, lingering, 'is all right' look in the glass; she might have said, with perfect truth, that she never saw a more lovely face, a form so light, and so charming a mixture of grace and simplicity.

But Anne Grey said and thought none of this: she only thought as she gave her last look in the glass, as her maid held her gloves for her, and gave an approving glance at her handy-works, "suppose I should be too late for dinner! I wish I was safely in the room, or that I had Sophy or mama to go down with me!" and her colour heightened as she walked down stairs and passed through the hall.

Her hand was on the drawing-room door—she heard the sound of many voices within, and waited one moment to take breath, till, convinced that courage would not come if she waited an hour, she opened the door. Edward

Temple looked up one moment as she entered, and the next was busily talking again to a pretty, as Anne thought (very beautiful girl) seeming perfectly unconscious of the presence of the quiet Anne Grey, whom he had flattered before dinner; and very conscious of the presence, agreeableness, and beauty of the young lady to whom he was talking with such animation.

Lady Hadley was in the room, and to Anne's delight, she saw Miss Trevor—the constant visitor, dear old Miss Trevor! by her she was warmly welcomed, and Lady Hadley instantly made room for her on the sofa, and introduced her to Lady Denham who sat next her.

Lord and Lady Denham and their daughter (the young lady to whom Edward Temple was devoting himself as Anne entered), Miss Trevor, Mr. Oswald, a hunting friend of Lord Hadley's, Mr. and Mrs. Dormer, and a Mr.

Hutchinson formed the party at Hadley; not to take into account the dinner visitors who came and went and were forgotten!

Lord and Lady Denham were people of fashion, if I may use that term: 'They were very fine,' as Mrs. Dodson would have said: 'They were very worldly,' as the melancholy half starving country curate would have said: 'They were very entertaining and charming,' as the world would have said of them. Miss Denham, their daughter, was just as exclusive (if that is not an obsolete word) as were her father and mother: very pretty, very brilliant, very accomplished, a little ill-natured, and, as she thought, very clever; perhaps the world would have said, very clever too; for to sum up all, she was very much the fashion!

The rest of the party were ordinary kind of people, whom one meets every day, and never cares whether one meets again or

not. Mr. Dormer prosy, Mrs. Dormer blue, Mr. Oswald a thorough fox-hunter, Mr. Hutchinson a quiet, good sort of young man, who had just left college, and tried to be civil and attentive to the ladies, still looking like a boy, and evidently *gené* by the feeling that he did so. But he was heir to a title and fortune ; so he put forth his small pretensions in a small voice ; and was tolerated by young ladies when no one preferable was present. He was allowed to engross a little of Miss Denham's attention at odd moments, but was never perceived by her when Mr. Temple was willing to speak, or even sitting within talking distance of her. Such was the party at Hadley.

Anne felt shy, and was very near thinking that even an evening at Hadley could be disagreeable, as she saw Edward Temple devoting himself to the amusement of Miss Denham, talking, laughing with her, and listening to her

exclusive talking, persuading her to sing, and attending to her song. As this continued during the whole of the first part of the evening, and she never saw him once approaching herself, she actually began to think that even Hadley could be disagreeable.

She saw that she had expected too much, and, I believe, said to herself something very moral, and sensible, though perhaps not very original, about brightest hopes decaying, and the fairest expectations being soonest disappointed ; but she was a good quiet girl, and sat so very composedly attending to Miss Trevor, that no one would have supposed, who looked at her placid face, that she was not as happy and contented as she appeared.

She had just given up all idea that Mr. Temple would speak to her that evening, when she found that he had left Miss Denham to be amused by Mr. Hutchinson, as well as she

could, and had placed himself near the table at which she was sitting.

She was intent on a new sort of knitting just taught her by Miss Trevor, and became doubly intent as he drew near. But he would not allow the knitting to go on uninterrupted.

“You are very industrious,” said he in a quiet voice ; and as Anne raised her head she probably looked pleased, that, at last, he had spoken to her.

“Yes,” said she. “I am learning a new kind of work,” and she blushed as she thought “what a foolish thing to have said ! How silly to tell him that I am learning a new kind of work !”

“Miss Trevor has taught you then, I am sure,” said he in a lower voice, for Miss Trevor was near.

“Yes,” said Anne smiling.

“I dare say it is very pretty, or very useful

then," continued he. "All ladies' work is, of course, pretty or useful. One is always assured that it is useful, though it is sometimes difficult to believe it. I hope, Miss Grey," said he after a pause, "that you will sing this evening?" and he looked at her for an answer.

"I don't know," said Anne, and she felt embarrassed, for she saw that Mr. Temple was still looking at her. It was very strange, but she felt so much less at ease with him than she had formerly done.

"I hope you will sing," continued he, heedless of the confusion he was making in the knitting. "I have often thought of that song—that one beautiful song! and perhaps," said he, lowering his voice, and looking at her; "I have often thought of the person who sung it." He stopped. Anne almost started with surprise and delight. Was this really said to her—was

it really meant? or rather, did it mean anything? and a moment's reflection suggested that he meant to ridicule her. The thought aroused a little indignation, which gave her courage to look up and attempt an answer; she had begun to say, "I am afraid you are laughing at my song," when she was checked by observing Edward Temple with his eyes still fixed on her face with an expression of earnestness.

She stopped—blushed deeply—said something about being very glad to sing, and turned to Miss Trevor to ask her how her knitting should go on.

Edward Temple remained a few minutes by her side—withdrew his eyes—took up a book, and looked at it, to allow Anne time to recover the alarm which he saw he had excited, but it could not be overcome—the knitting was not so soon to be at an end; so he put down the book, got up, and walked away to join Lady

Denham in cheating Lord Hadley at double Patience, to attract Miss Denham to watch 'mama's' Patience, and to be laughing and making others laugh as if the merriest thing in the world were a game at Patience; and Anne finished her work.

But whilst the knitting went on, and in spite of Mr.Oswald's animated description of 'a find,' and an 'in at the death,' she thought, and wondered, and wondered and thought; "was it really true? was it a dream that he had said it?" she asked herself, over and over again; but he really had said it: she could not misunderstand. It was spoken, though in so low a voice (and Anne thought there never was one so agreeable), yet so distinct and clear that she could not have been mistaken as to the words. No, he certainly had used those words; but then he might have been in jest; perhaps he had, but then his look! no, Anne did not

think he could have been, and she would be happy—she would be delighted. She was, in fact, in a flutter of surprise and joy ; yet she scarce knew why, as she again saw Mr. Temple talking and laughing with Miss Denham.

They were seated together on a sofa, rather apart from the players at Patience : Miss Denham had just finished an Italian song which he had admired. “ I wonder whether he says the same thing to her ? ” thought Anne ; and she sighed a very little.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next day was agreeably spent at Hadley. The Denhams discovered that Anne, though a country girl,—a person whom no one knew, was still a great favourite with Lady Hadley. She was ‘*distinguée*’ and pretty — there was something naïve and interesting about her, and Edward Temple talked to her.

In short, she was just the kind of girl to take up—to rave about. So Miss Denham asked

her to practise duets with her : Lady Denham found out a likeness for her to Lady *something somebody* ; made room for her on the sofa, and talked to her in her most agreeable manner for ten minutes at a time ; admired her singing and her gown ; told Lady Hadley within her hearing that she never saw such beautiful hair ! such eyes ! such a skin !—asked Anne if she did not draw as well as she played, and was quite sure she did.

Anne found Miss Denham agreeable and lively, and really enjoyed playing duets with her, for she played well, though she was perhaps more indebted to art than to nature for her musical powers. She had learnt a good style, and that supplied the place of natural feeling and expression. There was no charm in her performance, but it was brilliant and shewy ; *she kept her time*, and the duets went on very pleasantly.

Then Anne was made to sing, and Lady Denham and Miss Denham were in raptures; Edward Temple came into the room at the moment. He seated himself very quietly in an arm-chair — took up a book; and whether he read or listened, or did both, Anne could not say; but he did not speak.

When her song was over, Miss Denham asked him to come and sing: she said that she remembered a song of his that she liked so much! It had haunted her ever since.

“I have had it in my head,” said she, “and yet not in enough; and I can not get it out or in. Do you know that feeling, Miss Grey? You must come and sing it, Mr. Temple, in pity to my head. I shall certainly die of a tune if you do not. Did you ever hear of the poor woman who went into a low nervous fever about a country dance? No never! How strange! Morning and

night the country dance was hopping, and skipping, and buzzing in her head. To a certain point it always went, over and over again; the same country-dance! But when it came to a certain difficult passage it always stopped. Nothing would make it go on; fingering—counting—nothing would do. That was the melancholy part of it! the doctors tried in vain: if they could only have got over that difficult passage all would have been well! and she would have been cured! But the doctors could not manage it—the difficult passage was not to be overcome, and into a low nervous fever she went. Poor soul! I believe she is dead now! A sad story, Miss Grey,” said she, joining in Anne’s laugh, “but it is all for the sake of arousing Mr. Temple’s pity. Who knows but that I may go into a nervous fever about his song?”

“I shall be very sorry!” said Mr. Temple, in a melancholy voice, and not stirring;

“but like the old woman’s head with the country-dance, I can’t get over it ! My song and her difficult passage are never to be heard. I deeply regret——”

“No, no, Mr. Temple,” said Miss Denham, interrupting him—“don’t talk of regret ; you are very disobliging ; is not he, Miss Grey?”

“I suppose I ought to say so,” said Anne, “though I am rather inclined to take Mr. Temple’s part, as I should like so much to follow his example, and never sing but when I like. The example is so good a one,” said she, laughing, “that I think I shall follow it.”

“It will be a sufficient punishment for my indolence, if you do,” said Edward Temple. “Pray do not put your plan in effect,” continued he, getting up. “Miss Denham, I am ready to sing a whole music-book full, if you like ;” and he began to sing, looking at Anne as he did so ; then seeming tired of it, he left the

instrument, and walked away to the other end of the room, leaving Miss Denham a little mortified, and a little cross.

However it was all lost upon him, for he was soon too eager in a political discussion with Lord Denham to bestow any more attention on either her or Anne.

“Mr. Temple is very agreeable when he likes,” said she, to Anne.

“Yes, very,” was the reply, and Anne turned away her head as she spoke.

Nothing remarkable occurred that evening or the next morning. Who has not known the monotony of a country-house? Who has not known that the more comfortable, the more happy, it may be, the fewer events there will be to relate?

But alas!—who has not known its dulness? Who has not known the long morning—the expectation of hearing one o'clock strike, and

finding it only twelve? Who has not known the sight of the interminable piece of work, regularly brought down by the lady of the house, the paucity of ideas conveyed with the work—the question “what shall we do to-day? do you like a drive? I am afraid it is rather cold!” which shews you that the hope suggested by the offer is not to be realized—that you are expected not to wish to drive. “You will prefer walking, I dare say: I should like to shew you my poultry house.”

It is unluckily a cold, dull day. There has been a copious fall of rain: the leafless trees are dripping—pools of water are standing in the walks, and you must think with delight of the sight of dripping bantams and dirty poultry houses. But you are saved: the yawning soberness of your morning talk is likely to have no end, for lo! another shower.

“Ah it rains I see—we shall not stir to-day.

There is nothing so comfortable as sitting in doors at one's work all the morning."

How does the interminableness of that *all morning* strike on your fancy! You are very cold: you look at the fire-place: comfort there, at least, you think: but the fire is scarcely blazing. The lady of the house sees you cast a longing look towards the grate: she obligingly hopes you are not too warm.

"I don't think we have too much fire, have we? It was so hot this morning, I ordered them not to make such large fires;" and you resign yourself to the knowledge that the care all day will be to keep the room at freezing point. Oh! who has not known all this and many more of the charms of a long day in a country house!

Anne Grey felt none of these annoyances. Hadley was proverbially pleasant. There was always plenty to do—to think of—to talk of,

and to see :—the day was always too short—the clock struck one when twelve was expected.

One so often hears that such and such a house is ‘so pleasant,’ and such and such another ‘so dull.’ From what does this proceed? Can no one tell? The same people are met with at both the dull and the pleasant house :—the owners may not be peculiarly agreeable :—the house may not be particularly good, or pretty, or well-furnished—no peculiar beauty out of doors—no peculiar beauty within. In short, no one knows why it is ; yet such and such houses always are pleasant, and this was the case with Hadley, and it certainly was not the house or the place, the visitors, or even the owner that made it so. Lord Hadley, though an excellent man, was not particularly entertaining ; and though, it is true, that Lady Hadley was a charming woman ; yet how many charming women there are who have dull houses !

There must, we suppose, exist a peculiar art for parties at home. We wish that those few who possess it, who have studied (if they do study it), and have been successful, would give their knowledge to the world. It would be an act of praiseworthy benevolence.—How grateful should we feel towards those who had saved us from the long tedium of the dull days in our excellent neighbours' houses ! A monument would be raised to their memory when dead, or a statue erected to their praise when living ; inscribed with the warmest gratitude and veneration, from the distressed ladies and gentlemen of country life, to the greatest benefactors of any age or time.

But we must return to Anne Grey, and her enjoyment of the pleasant house at Hadley ; and so much did she enjoy it that she felt she should even be sorry to return home.

Mr. Temple had been very agreeable. They

had had a great deal of conversation together, and Anne always forgot her shyness in talking to him. He seemed interested in hearing her opinions, and anxious to draw them forth, and he never but once again said anything which made her consider whether he could be speaking seriously, or secretly ridiculing her.

Once more only did he make her start, and feel happy, and fearful, and doubtful. One evening he had left Miss Denham, after she had been exerting her best powers for his amusement,—he left her, to come and sit by Anne. They had talked for long on various subjects, and at length they spoke of memory—of the power of recollecting faces—of identifying in the grown-up person the child that had been known at school,—of remembering those who had been seen but once.

“There are some people I feel it would be impossible to forget,” said Edward Temple. “I

do not mean those whom one remembers merely for amusement; who strike one only from their absurdity; I mean those whom one remembers to love.—Yes,” said he, after a slight pause, and looking towards Anne, “there are some people whom I never could forget. Do not flatter yourself, Miss Grey, that you will ever be forgotten.”

The colour came into Anne’s face — her heart beat fast as she quickly withdrew her eyes. She felt that those words would never be forgotten. Perhaps they never were.

It was only this once more that anything was said to cause her, in the retirement of her chamber, to wonder, and be delighted—and to think “it really was,” and then “it never could be”—nothing but this to make her stand for minutes over the fire, wondering why her maid delayed so long, and to find at last that it was she who had kept her maid in waiting and sus-

pense:—nothing to make her look all round the room for her gloves, to find that they were both on her hands:—nothing to make her ask if Mr. Temple was gone down instead of Lady Hadley. No—there were but two slight occasions to make Anne do all this; to make her sometimes go into a reverie—sometimes smile in the middle of her reverie—sometimes give a little joyous bound in her light, noiseless step across the room. But there was daily just enough to make her late in coming up to dress, early in going down to breakfast, and to make her say to herself, “how very early we come to bed at Hadley!” Yes—there was just enough for this in Edward Temple’s manner.

“He is certainly more agreeable than ever,” thought Anne. “He talks more seriously to me; as if he thought my opinions worth hearing, and considered me worthy to be told his own! He certainly talks a great deal to Miss

Denham,"—Anne sighed a little; "but I do not think as he does to me. He always seems amused with her, and as if he were willing to amuse her: but it is different! I should not wish his manner to be the same with me! Yes—I think, after all, that he does like me the best! But how conceited!" thought she. "How presumptuous! No, I dare say he prefers her, and the difference of manner is a proof in her favour. He would probably wish to put forth all his powers of entertainment for me, as he does for her, if he did not think me too dull to understand him. I was very conceited," thought Anne. "I wonder whether he says he never could forget her? I dare say he does." And she went down stairs looking very sedate and diffident; but the moment she entered, Edward Temple left Miss Denham to come and talk to her, and at the end of half-an-hour's serious conversation, Anne Grey

entertained once more those same conceited opinions.

“It is a pity how the world spoils people!” says the country cousin, who longs to go to town. “It’s a pity how wordly people are!” says the discontented, philosophical fellow of a college, as he throws on one side my book, which Heaven knows how he had ever been deluded into opening!

CHAPTER V.

ANNE could not think of leaving Hadley without regret, and though she had stayed two days longer than was first intended, yet the five days seemed to have passed as quickly as if they had only been three.

Anne regretted the loss of Lady Hadley's society. She had been peculiarly kind : she had talked to her with such affectionate interest, and seemed anxious that Anne should regard her as a friend.

“ I hope you will often come to Hadley,” said she one day. “ Now we are got so far in our intimacy, we must not stop here and have to begin again. As long as you remain at Weston, you must remember how near it is to Hadley; and afterwards, when my little friend is no longer Anne Grey, you must not forget that you had some friends before you changed your name,” said she, smiling, and looking affectionately at her.

Anne blushed, looked grateful, and said all that was natural and proper about her never forgetting Lady Hadley — and never being likely to change her name.

“ Oh, yes,” said Lady Hadley, “ all girls form a virtuous resolution to be old maids, from sixteen to five-and-twenty; it is all very right: nevertheless I hope to see you married before a great many years have passed. “ There even is a person,” continued she,

whom I should have almost liked for you—but then alas! he is unfortunately not a marrying man! If he could once make up his mind to seriously attach himself, he would make an excellent husband. However, it is out of the question, so I would say to all my young lady friends ‘beware of Edward Temple!’ I think I must give a little advise to Miss Denham. But what a long lecture on marriage I have been giving you!” said she, smiling and rising as she spoke. “I must make haste and shew that I have respect enough for its *convenances* by attending my own husband who is waiting for me all this time!”

Anne had been rather surprised, and a little vexed, by what Lady Hadley had said of Mr. Temple. Still she believed it was partly said in jest, and that no particular allusion to her had been intended. She hoped Lady Hadley could not fancy her so conceited as to suppose

Mr. Temple in love with her. She hoped she did not think her manner with him had been forward. One thing however was certain—Mr. Temple was not a marrying man; and she left Hadley with this conviction on her mind, but with a conviction, no less strong, that another so agreeable a person did not exist in the world.

The visit to Chatterton was to take place the day after Anne's return, and she had some anticipations of pleasure, though leaving home again so soon, for Mr. Temple was to be there: but there were still warmer anticipations of happiness in returning home even after so short an absence. Yet in that solitary drive from Hadley, Charlotte Daventry's words often came across her mind. She thought of Lady Hadley and of Edward Temple—of Sophy and of her mother: she felt that Charlotte might be right: there were different appreciations of

her character ; but she checked the thought, and when the carriage door was opened and she found herself again at home—felt her mother's fond kiss—her father's affectionate embrace—saw Sophy's glad look—heard William's hearty, "well Miss Anne! we are all very glad to have you again," she forgot Charlotte Daventry, and if she remembered her words, it was only to say they were false.

"I am, and I ought to be satisfied—more than satisfied, with such love! only a few days absent and welcomed as if I had been away for months!"

"Dear, dear home! How I love you!" ejaculated she to herself as she put off her bonnet and shawl. She had forgotten all in that warm and pure delight—that love for those who made her home! She who added a charm to her father's house; she whose gentle voice, whose never failing cheerfulness, contentment,

elegance and sense, lent to domestic hours their peace and joy—she forgot all but her home : forgot that she had a wish, a hope, on earth beyond. She forgot the world—its troubles—its joys—forgot even Edward Temple ; and not till she had sat half an hour alone with Charlotte Daventry the next morning, did she remember that even at home there were sorrows and cares, and that reasons might exist to seek pleasures and forgetfulness elsewhere ; and, as she prepared for Chatterton, she found that she could leave home with less of fond regret than she would perhaps have wished to feel.

But she would not allow herself to repine : she turned her thoughts to the contemplation of enjoyment now in her power. She thought that society had its pleasures, and that it was right to appreciate and enjoy them ; and if the knowledge that Edward Temple was to be at Chatterton added not a little to her amiable

spirit of contentment, do not let us think that she deserved no praise, because pleasure mingled with her duty. The path of duty need not always be painful and rugged ; yet though it is sometimes spread with flowers—though gleams of sunshine sometimes gild its gloom, yet even from this flowery path we often turn aside with disgust and negligence, because we are unwilling to tread in the steps pointed out to us. This should not be—nor should we deem the duties of others always light and easy, because they are not devoid of everything pleasing to recommend them. We may admire the being whom we see struggling in the narrow path of duty with no ray of gladness to cheer him on — let us admire, reverence, respect ! but, let us not for this refuse all admiration to the being who continues in the same path of duty with more of joy to cheer his steps. He likewise deserves our praise ;

and even so may we look with approbation on the quiet contentedness of Anne Grey. We may praise her that she determined to find happiness in every event, and in every situation in which Providence had placed her.

There is, it is true, and how gladly do we feel that there is, a real pleasure arising from the consciousness that we are performing our duty. Yes! though the brightness of Anne's smile had faded, though there was almost a touch of sadness in the calmness of her countenance, yet when the confidential conversation ended, she and Charlotte Daventry quitted the room together, who would not rather have been that unrepining being, more sad, it is true, than she had hitherto been, than her whose lip was curled in triumph, on whose face a smile dwelt for a moment? Who would not rather at that moment as they saw the victim, and the deceiver—as they gazed on the proud

smile, which curled the lip, and lighted up the dark expressive eyes of the one—and saw the tear which filled the clear blue eye of the other—who would not rather so have wept with Anne, than so have smiled with Charlotte?

Sophy was in high spirits at the thoughts of going to Chatterton. She loved society, and society returned the compliment. Contrary to all rules of etiquette, Mr. and Mrs. Grey were taking out three young ladies at once; nothing could be so wrong, and Mrs. Grey would never have ventured on the display of so much beauty and agreeableness at once, had not Mr. Foley rode over on purpose to beg that it might be so.

“Chatterton would be so highly honoured! Chatterton was quite large enough! a perfect desert in size! Really it was impossible to fill it! Mrs. Grey must grant his little request.” Mrs. Grey was exceedingly shocked, quite

distressed, and quite delighted. Mr. Foley went away quite satisfied that every one of the family would come, though it would be so distressing to poor Mrs. Grey's feelings ; and Mrs. Grey said, when he left the room, " Mr. Foley is a particularly agreeable gentlemanlike person !" and as she saw the three young ladies in the carriage with her, she bore her sufferings so well, that she actually looked nearly as happy as when she saw Lord Stoketon at the ball, or had completed her largest piece of tent-stitch.

" It would have been so hard to have left poor Charlotte at home," thought she ; " and yet I would not have left Anne, for I am sure George Foley admires her, and Chatterton is such a very nice place ! Mr. Foley said it was so large it really could not be filled ; but however with a large young family, and Sophy's children, who might stay there whilst she came

to Weston ; and William perhaps,—in a little time I hope, though I don't know yet who he may have fixed upon ; and Charlotte, Mrs. Robert Dobson—Yes ! Mr. Foley would find it would not be at all too large—but then he would be dead, poor man !” And Mrs. Grey comfortably reposed in the corner of the carriage on her way to Chatterton, looking, worthy woman, to future happiness, in the delightful contemplation of her charming host's decease, to whom she wished no ill on earth—merely that he should make room for his son.

Mrs. Grey, never thought of wishing beyond the common course of nature, but she certainly forgot that Mr. Foley was a little younger than herself !

Amongst the party at Chatterton, were Frank Crawford, Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright, Mr. Arthur Dalton, Mr. Temple, Lady Downton—(Sir John was in Leicestershire for a

happy fortnight), and Sir Henry Poynton, who was always every where.

How is it some people always are everywhere? Every body meets them—every body is surprised that you should have met them, though no one is surprised to meet them themselves. Every body met Sir Henry Poynton, and no one started or looked surprised when they walked into the drawing-room before dinner to see Sir Henry's hale, hearty figure, ready with his extended hand to greet them.

There were others at Chatterton not amongst our old acquaintances, and justice to Mr. Foley demands that we mention a Duchess Dowager, and an Ex-minister among the number; but we have so often gone through the labelling process, that it is time to follow the example of those authors of more interesting books, who dare not touch on the inexpressible feelings of the hero or heroine. Such

feelings, as our novelists tells us, are more easily imagined than described. We doubt the assertion, but we adopt his plan, with regard to the Chatterton visitors, and leave them all to the brilliant fancy of the reader.

Whether the presence of any of these visitors added to the agreeableness of the first evening, I cannot say ; but it certainly did not diminish the pleasure George Foley experienced in the society of Anne, nor that which Anne felt in the conversation of Edward Temple.

“ He is perfect !” whispered Charlotte Daventry to Anne, as they separated at the top of the stairs ; “ and perhaps he thinks Anne Grey perfect !” added she, with an arch smile as she pressed the small white fingers that were reposing in happy confidence in hers. Anne could only smile and say ‘ good night,’ as with a light step she followed Sophy to her room.

“ Yes,” thought she, “ he is perfect.”

“ What a cold mannered girl Miss Foley is !” said Sophy, interrupting Anne’s charitable train of thought.

“ No,” said she, at length, as if she had been deliberating on the question of Miss Foley’s coldness.

“ No ?” said Sophy, looking up surprised, and pausing, as she unclasped her bracelets. “ No ? why, Anne, you are half asleep !”

“ Oh ! am I ?” said Anne, recollecting herself. “ No, I am not sleepy—but I forgot—what was it you asked ?”

“ Ah ! just so,” said Sophy, laughing : “ that *no*, I was quite sure was the answer to a question in your own mind—‘ Is Mr. George Foley handsome or not ?’ and ‘ no,’ says Miss Anne Grey !”

“ Mr. George Foley !” said Anne, with a tone of surprise ; “ no indeed, Sophy, I was not thinking of him.”

“ Oh then, I know ! It was Sir Henry Poynton ? ”

“ No, not even of him,” said Anne. “ How pretty Charlotte looked this evening,” added she, after a moment’s pause. “ Once I looked at her, when she was talking to Mr. Crawford, and I never saw anything more striking than her expression. She has beautiful eyes ! ”

“ She is ‘ belle comme le jour,’ ” said Sophy, “ and, to speak the truth, with all her childishness, a little bit of a flirt.”

“ No, no, that is not fair, Sophy : ” Charlotte has no idea of flirting ; she is perfectly simple ! ”

“ And so naïve and simple,” said Sophy, “ that she has won the admiration of Mr. Crawford, who, by the way, I do not quite like.”

Anne did not continue the conversation—she was thinking of Charlotte Daventry’s man-

ner at that moment; of a smile that she had seen given and returned between her and Mr. Crawford.

“After all, I do not think Mr. Temple is so very agreeable,” said Sophy, after a little silence.

Anne’s attention was not so far absent as on a former occasion; it was immediately aroused by Sophy’s remark. It called forth no reply; but there succeeded a quick rush of colour to her face, and a diligent search for a ring which she had not dropped.

The morrow was one of those bright and sunny days, which always betoken in a work of fiction either some heavy calamity to the hero and heroine, or a sympathetic piece of brilliant fortune. I can scarcely say which of the two it betokened to Anne and Sophy Grey. It seemed unmarked by any peculiar event, whether of joy or sorrow, to them! Yet through

the world did not both exist—was there not joy and sorrow on that day? In every hour, in every moment, joy and sorrow to millions?

Yes! on each day that calls us back to life and light, all around us the mingled web is wove. The many rise, like us—the many weep, or smile, or laugh, and feel. Could we but see and know, what a mass of varied misery and joy would meet our scrutiny! What feelings in those many hearts! What fear, what joy, what hope! What bright realities! What dark forebodings! What fluttering hearts! What fond, gay visions! There are tears for those departed; there are watchings round the dying man—there are last words spoken—there are death struggles—there are murders—there are treacheries fulfilled—there are words spoken like daggers to the heart—there are secrets told that blight—there are young hearts awoke to grief.

Yes, but there are smiles called forth—there are hopes fulfilled, sweet words whispered, sweet sounds heard; there are parents' smiles, and parents' tears of joy; there are children's grateful hearts poured forth; there are children who have watched, and loved, and been rewarded; there are suspicions quelled—doubts that are hushed—mysteries unravelled; there are those who enter upon life, blessed, welcomed, and caressed; there are calm and holy deaths. Yes, all around us, joy and sorrow, are busy in their work!

But let us turn again to our homely scene. Let us turn to the minutiae, the servile copyism of our Dutch school of portraiture. Let us dip our brush in gay and vivid hues, and paint with careful hand the little world of social life around us. Let us be clear, minute, distinct; and now, with steady touch, and watchful eye, we prepare our colours; then select and blend.

The morning sun has brought to light the leafless trees of Chatterton—the frost has disappeared—the air breathes mild and soft—a touch of spring is there—the rooks are up—they are spread abroad, now hovering over the open lawn, now uttering their busy notes—then resting on the ground, walking with strutting industry along the grass; now up and away again, with a cheerful caw. The mist is gone:—the sun streams forth; and the bare branches glitter with the dew drops still hanging on the trees. The sun shines forth: it streams in through the latticed cottage window: it streams in through the curtained window of the rich. It streams in to the large spacious rooms at Chatterton, and wakes Sophy and Anne Grey, to the sweet consciousness of being.

“What a lovely day!” said Anne, as she put aside the curtain. “It is almost like

spring! It will be a beautiful day for our drive," and her face brightened with a happy smile.

Why was Anne so happy? Was it the lovely day alone? No, not quite; for though a spring-like day will sometimes give a spring-like feeling to the heart; though a bright sun will give a sunshiny feeling to the mind; yet it was not this alone. Anne thought, as she saw the sun so bright, that the open carriage would be put in requisition:—that there would be a place in it for herself, and (shall we say it?) for Edward Temple!

Anne heard the cawing of the rooks, saw the clear blue sky, the light grey, purple, and yellow tints of the clouds all blending, intermingling, and gently moving forward in the soft mild breeze; and the sun-light brightness was reflected on her cheek—the softness and the gladness was repeated in her eyes:

and the beating of her heart! was that as gentle as the whispering freshness of the morning breeze?

Oh! Anne Grey, how is it that I write this of you? “What nonsense!” you would have said; and your pretty rosy lips would have looked “what nonsense!” and even your soft blue eyes would have expressed with a quiet contempt, “what nonsense!” — and perhaps it is nonsense for an every day commonplace story like mine.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Miss Anne Grey, here is a place, Sir Henry Poynton has been religiously preserving for you,” said Mr. Temple, shewing her a vacant seat between himself and Sir Henry at breakfast. Anne took the offered seat, and for one second at least was unable to reply to Sir Henry Poynton’s “ Good morning.”

“ You have been very idle this morning,” said Sir Henry, with a good-humoured smile on his weather-beaten face. “ I have had great

difficulty to keep a chair for you. I could not have managed it had not Temple helped me :—
“ Ah ! Temple,” added he, speaking across Anne to Mr. Temple, “ I was telling Miss Grey how cleverly you managed. I am telling her that I am indebted to you for the honour of having her here by me.”

“ Miss Grey, perhaps is not indebted to me for one part of the manœuvre,” said he, turning quickly round, and looking at Anne. “ She might have been placed between two people who were agreeable to her, instead of one ; but it is difficult to be unselfish at all times.” The sentence was finished in a low voice to Anne : she alone heard it.

“ But I was saying,” continued Sir Henry to Anne, “ how idle you were this morning. There was Miss Daventry up with the lark.”

“ Yes, I see she is blushing,” said he looking jocose and nodding to her across the

table. We must lay it to the infirmity of his vision, that he spoke of blushes which had no existence.

“ Ah ! I see she is blushing : and well she may. She will not hear, so I may say what I like,” continued he, in a particularly audible, confidential voice. “ There I found her actually having a tête à tête with a young gentleman, when I came down, thinking myself an excellent man because I was so early ; there I found her already seated in an arm chair, and Mr. Crawford in another. Ah ! Miss Daven-try,” smiling and nodding at her, as at last he caught her eye, “ I am telling tales. I am telling a little story of you !”

“ Not a short one, I should suppose,” said Frank Crawford, half aloud, to Charlotte Daventry who sat by him.

“ Yes ! it’s very true : Miss Grey can tell you all about it !”

Sir Henry chuckled, Charlotte laughed, looked very innocent, said, "Oh! what is it?" and then the joke was over, and Anne could listen to a voice on the other side of her.

"Your cousin is a very natural character," said Mr. Temple, with a scrutinizing look, as she answered,

"Yes, perfectly?"

"I see you think so!" was his reply. Anne did not like his tone as he uttered these words: but he immediately turned the subject from Charlotte Daventry; and as Anne listened and replied, she soon forgot Charlotte, Mr. Crawford, Sir Henry Poynton, everything but—Anne Grey, I must not be so unkind towards you—no—not by me shall that modest shrinking delicacy be wounded, by having its thoughts, its feelings, and its weaknesses displayed to the cold, unfriendly eye of the world. No, let the modest retirement of character

remain unexposed. Let it lie hidden and beautiful in its retirement—shrinking like the violet amidst its leaves from the notice, the pollution, and the contamination of the world.

“Who is for a drive this morning?” said Mr. Foley. “Or rather is any not for one on such a day? Quite the sort of day,” said he, turning to the Dowager Duchess of—— who sat contentedly on his right hand, “to make one hate the sight of Ottomans and sofas, and regret one has been at the expense of heated flues—new invented stoves &c., ‘*La belle nature*,’ is every thing to-day! one is quite disgusted with stoves, and rugs, and Axminster carpets.”

“Are you, really!” said the good simple duchess. “I think they are very comfortable; but, I dare say, it will be very pleasant for a drive.”

“Oh! then we will certainly have one:”

then raising his voice and making a general appeal to the company, said, "the Duchess and I are engaged for a drive. Who will join our party? Temple," continued he, addressing him across the table, "I have something to shew you. I have a carriage that will amuse you! and to tell you the truth, I have a design upon you; you are to drive in it to day—it is a whim of Mrs. Foley's. She fell in love with it at—where was it?—oh, Cheltenham—she thought it would be exactly the thing for her charitable expeditions. I believe, good enthusiastic woman, she would have bought one out of the stand if I would have let her—but that would not do! so I sent to the fellow in Long-acre that builds me my carriages, and he took the pattern;—and this is the carriage you must all admire."

Temple looked amused and acquiescent, and then turning to Anne, "Will you make my duties light," he said in a low voice; "will

you promise to drive with me? Miss Anne Grey," said he, raising his voice and addressing Mr. Foley, "has promised to be miserable for a whole morning's drive with me. We are both victims: you must collect your others as you can. I leave that to your powers of persuasion, Foley."

"Oh! I am quite a willing victim!" said Mrs. Cartwright, "and is there room for another person?"

"Yes, actually," said Mr. Foley with mock gravity, "there is room for four in Mrs. Foley's fly."

"Oh! then, there must be another victim!" cried Mrs. Cartwright, "who must it be?"

"I am another most willing victim—most humble slave!" said Mr. Arthur Dalton, trying to look comic and insinuating at once; "Most humble slave!" Who ever saw Arthur Dalton, but felt how thoroughly those words be-

longed to him! Edward Temple smiled, looked at Anne, and saw she understood him.

“How easily the chain sits on some people!” said he. “Surely some English were born un-English! Happy, humble man! Do not you envy him?”

The drive was to take place. Every body was to go, and it was to be charming, “a real gipsy expedition,” as Mr. Foley said. Every one was to be happy, and they were to see the ruins of a castle, and a Roman *something*—no one knew what; but it was decidedly Roman, though it looked like a real English heap of soil and the remains of a real English wall. Still it was quite worth going to see.

“Do not you feel quite inspired, Miss Foley?” said Mr. Temple. “Do not you feel a noble enthusiasm rising, and the spirit of improvising coming upon you? Cannot you fancy some one of the party—Mr. Dalton, perhaps—a Roman patriot?—look at him, Miss Foley!”

Miss Foley and others who stood near smiled as their eyes followed the form of the Roman Patriot reclining in an arm-chair, fondling Mrs. Foley's lap-dog, and looking sweet and laughing in affected merriment with Mrs. Cartwright.

Mr. Foley had arranged the party. Edward Temple was, after all, not to go in the fly. George must take his place—the joke was over, and Mr. Temple must go with Lady Emily Harville and the Duchess. Mr. Foley had made up his mind that it should be so, and no one could rebel against his decisions in his own house. George Foley thought it much the best arrangement, and when Mr. Foley appealed to her, Anne said so also, whilst George Foley listened to hear how willing she was to have him for a companion.

Perhaps Anne did not know that Mr. Temple was within hearing when she agreed with

Mr. Foley, and looked as much pleased as George Foley wished. "He was very willing to give it up," thought she, "after having asked me to go with him!"

Some people might have said that Edward Temple was out of humour. Perhaps he was; but he was a good-tempered man. "What airs that man gives himself!" thought Mr. Arthur Dalton. "I wish I could get his tone and manner."

"Parties of pleasure are proverbially parties of pain," said Edward Temple a few minutes afterwards to Mr. Grey who was near him. "I am sure you must agree in thinking that no bore is equal to that of being forced to be delighted for a whole day together, with nothing to make one so, except doing the very thing one don't like."

"I agree so perfectly," said Mr. Grey, "that I shall beg off. I am old, you know,"

smiling; "so I can get out of these difficulties easily—that is one privilege of being an old married man!"

"I cannot claim your privilege, but I intend to follow your example. But perhaps you will do a good-natured thing and take my place at the side of Lady Emily? She is a charming person, as Foley will tell you."

"Oh! I thought," said Mr. Grey, smiling, "that you were of the Foley fly party?"

"Oh, no! that is at an end. Miss Anne Grey would not accept of me as a companion, so I am doomed to make the disagreeable to the Duchess and Lady Emily. They must suffer for my mortified vanity."

"Anne," said Mr. Grey, as she passed near him to look for a book, "do you know what Mr. Temple says of you? I hear you refused to drive with him;" said he laughing, and gently drawing his daughter towards him.

“Oh, no!” said Anne a little embarrassed, “I did not refuse; I believe it was Mr. Temple who refused to drive with me;” and she blushed for having said what she felt.

Some people profess to say whatever comes into their heads, and to be so natural that they cannot help it; and from those we may always expect to hear either many rude and ill-natured things, or a great deal of nonsense: we may be quite sure that the regular professor of this charming *naïveté* is either very silly, or very malicious.

Anne Grey made no professions of being under the dreadful necessity of uttering her thoughts aloud. She had neither the artifice of being unnatural, nor of striving to seem natural. She was perfectly without artifice: her heart was filled with truth, sincerity, charity, and kindness: she had no disguise; and if she sometimes said that which etiquette might

have blushed at for etiquette's sake, she never breathed one single word which good taste or good feeling would have shrunk from expressing. She, in fact, said all which those who profess to be natural have heard, and thought so beautiful that they would imitate it. Fatal mistake! to try to imitate the most inimitable of all graces! But to Anne nature had given this artless charm, and nature, like a kind mother, had blinded her alone to the knowledge of its possession. Some will say, 'where is the envied charm of those few words which fell from her lips?' Yet had any one seen and heard her at the moment I describe, when, as she uttered those words she leant against her father's chair and put her hand upon his shoulder, they would have acknowledged that a peculiar charm did exist.

"Then you will not refuse to accept my services once more?" said Edward Temple,

looking at her with animation. "You will let me be useful to the best of my abilities in driving away the dullness of a long drive? in putting on your cloak for you when it is slipping off—in opening gates if we have no half dozen grooms on curveting steeds behind us, which Heaven knows whether Foley would ever forgive me for supposing there would not be?" Anne smiled, and the pleasure betrayed in her smile satisfied Edward Temple without waiting for any other reply.

"Then I will arrange it all!" said he, his ill-humour gone. "Mr. Grey, what do you say to Lady Emily and the Duchess? any wish? It is the last time of asking, remember, for I am going to decide their fates irrevocably in a few minutes. No? Ah, Mr. Grey! can you also resist such charms? Rank, beauty, and fashion! Well then, Miss Grey, I have your consent? may I say?"

“Yés,” said Anne.

“Then, George Foley, you are doomed to a Duchess and Lady Emily for a drive, or for life !”

Edward Temple had soon arranged it, and as poor George Foley looked at the happy radiant face of Anne when Edward Temple returned to her, he could only confess to himself how little happy he felt ! At that moment he would have liked the privilege of hating Edward Temple. But he forbad the thought. He had strong feelings, but he had a strong control over them. He might be grieved, but he need not be unamiable ; and as he saw Anne’s look of pleasure he only felt the chill of disappointment ; and if he envied Edward Temple’s powers of fascination, shall we blame him ?

No ! let the young lady who wishes she possessed the beauty of her preferred rival—let the

starving artist who wishes himself gifted with the talent of his distinguished fellow labourer—let the poor neglected child, who wishes that on herself were bestowed some of the caresses lavished on her more favoured brother or sister—let these plead for him, and let us also acquit him for coveting Edward Temple's power of captivating the heart of Anne Grey.

CHAPTER VII.

THE drive took place : Mrs. Foley's fly was pronounced to be the most charming fly that ever came out of coachmaker's hands : the Roman remains were admired and apostrophised : Mr. Arthur Dalton looked as like a Roman patriot as he was expected to look ; and the day, though in scarcely a spring month, was yet exactly like spring, and exactly suited for a gipsy party ; — the carriages that might have been closed were thrown open ; and no one pitied the ' poor wretches,' in Mrs. Foley's open fly.

No! every one might have envied them. Some perhaps did! and did Anne Grey think she deserved to be envied? Did she think it such a very charming drive? Oh yes! and Mrs. Cartwright and Mr. Arthur Dalton! they liked it also. Edward Temple perhaps thought it charming too—Yes! and perhaps in that drive much interesting conversation passed between himself and Anne. But we must rest on conjecture alone: it may have been nothing new or entertaining.

Perhaps Edward Temple spoke of the world—of his dislike of worldly people—his admiration of those who were not? Perhaps he insinuated, that he never saw a being so unworldly as Anne Grey! never knew one whose slightest contamination by the world it would grieve him so deeply to see. Perhaps he said how easily the world would spoil, and harden, and sully even the purest, the most simple-minded. Perhaps

he warned Anne to beware—perhaps for *his sake* to beware; and (flattering reason) because she *was* the purest, the most simple-minded, and because of the grief it would cause him to see the slightest change in such a character. Perhaps Anne felt that the world might easily spoil—that it might change many—that it might change her in many things; still in one thing it never could change her! She never could forget Edward Temple.

But will he who mingles in this wicked, spoiling world—who *has* long mingled in it—will he forget—will he have said, and looked, and insinuated all this, merely for the amusement of the moment? Will he in a few short days be saying the self-same words—looking with the self-same looks at some other poor deluded, flattered girl? Will he perhaps remember her merely to think “hers was a pretty interesting character—an amusing study for an

idle half hour?" Yes, perhaps it will be so; perhaps all this was said and felt, and thought. But I do not say that it was, or that it will be.

All I dare tell is that when the party safely returned to Chatterton, just in time for dressing, Anne Grey looked very happy. She said it had been a very delightful drive, and the most charming carriage in the world. Edward Temple handed her out with almost more than necessary care, hoped she was not tired, in an anxious (perhaps, we may say) in a tender voice; and said, when the expedition was spoken of that evening, that it had been very pleasant, and that nothing would be so delightful as another drive,—“ if any more Roman ruins could be found—any Roman pig-styes: the Romans certainly must have had pigs—and they must have built them styes.”

“ Certainly,” said Lady Downton, who sat next him. “ Certainly. I wish my health would

allow ; but I am such a poor, weak, creature, . . . that I lose all these pleasures !”

“ Yes, indeed,” said Mr. Temple, compassionately. “ You cannot, I fear, look at Roman pig-styes.”

“ Ah no !” said Lady Dowton. She was not quite sure whether Mr. Temple pitied her or not. Poor Lady Dowton ! she was quite right not to be too certain.

“ Does not Lady Dowton rather amuse you ?” said Edward Temple to Anne, one evening at Chatterton.

“ I have known her so long,” said Anne, “ that the amusement is almost at an end.”

“ I can easily imagine that. To me it is all new ; dear, good Mrs. Foley’s unavoidable, and Lady Dowton’s avoidable, bad health, and interesting delicacy of mind and body go on so well together—they clash delightfully.”

And so it was. It may be supposed that the

characteristics of Lady Dowton and Mrs. Foley bore so great a similitude that it was impossible they should agree; but in justice to Mrs. Foley it must be said that all unpleasant feelings arising from their too great sympathy, were felt only by Lady Dowton. Mrs. Foley was exceedingly sorry for poor Lady Dowton, and I verily believe had often the tears in her eyes for her. But still they could not help clashing, for in the one there was the affectation of delicate health and sensibility; in the other the reality. To be ill, weak, nervous, and sensitive, was Lady Dowton's ambition—her delight. To be sensitive and weak in mind and body was poor Mrs. Foley's misfortune, and upon this she was so far from congratulating or priding herself, that she never could have imagined any other person doing so; and with all the heart that could be spared from the claims of her hundred cousins, she really pitied poor Lady Dowton.

No wonder that Lady Dowton should dislike her, in spite of her pity, when she saw that she really possessed all the enviable delicacy and sensibility to which she aspired. Her affected maladies, and Mrs. Foley's real ones were at endless variance; so in spite of Mrs. Foley's ready tear, and though she always called her 'poor Lady Dowton,' and 'poor thing,' Lady Dowton talked of Mrs. Foley's indolence; wished, with many a sigh, that she possessed her good health, and said how shocking it was when people gave way so terribly to [fancied evils.

"My dear Lady Dowton," said Mrs. Foley, that evening, as her ladyship was eagerly listening to a quite new, very scandalous story, with all the freshest *on dit's* detailed by Lady Caroline Fullerton, "my dear Lady Dowton, I am sure you must be tired to death by all this talking. Your health, I know, is so much like

mine--I am sure this noise is quite too much for us. Do come with me into my little snug-gery, where we shall be quite quiet, and you must really lie down a little."

It was said in such a kind, compassionate voice, that Lady Dowton was obliged to seem languid, to leave the delightful piece of scandal, and to follow Mrs. Foley.

"You are quite right, Mrs. Foley," said Edward Temple, "to take Lady Dowton away. You are quite right, Lady Dowton," said he in a confidential tone. "When once Lady Caroline begins to tell little stories of her dear friends, there is really no end of it; none but the *strongest* nerves could bear it."

Lady Dowton tried not to frown, and to walk away with a relieved and contented air from the possibility of hearing what she would have given everything in the world to hear.

"Poor woman!" said Edward Temple,

smiling at Anne, and seating himself by her as Lady Dowton withdrew. "It was almost too cruel! I half repented when I saw her look of agony, as I mentioned the interminable gossip."

"It was very cruel," said Anne, laughing. "Would it not be kind to call her back again?"

"No, no! that is a very charitable idea!" said he, "but my fit of remorse is over. I am much too happy here to allow of its continuance. A hundred Lady Downtons should not take me away!" and then, as he saw Anne look embarrassed by something too impressive in his manner, he added, "no! a hundred Lady Downtons should not take me away from Lady Caroline's newest scandal!" and he was so eager to hear it that he talked to Anne the whole time it was going on.

The next day was showery. No drives could be thought of on such a day. Towards evening

it altered ; the sun shone out before it set, but the ground was so wet that few of the party thought of stirring from the house. Two however of the number did venture forth together, and their voices might be heard as they turned the angle of the fir grove, and emerged in the long wide gravel walk some distance from the house.

These two adventurous people were Charlotte Daventry and Frank Crawford. They walked slowly ; perhaps Charlotte Daventry, a young and timid girl, such as we know her to be, wished to shake off her companion's attendance, and purposely chilled herself to make him feel that it would be more for his comfort to walk alone. As they turned the corner of the dark avenue of pines, and walked farther from the house, a part of their conversation might be heard. Charlotte Daventry was speaking. It was not in her usual voice—her usual childish

lively tone—her almost foolish manner. It was a new and different tone and manner.

“Yes! Isabella Foley is in love with William Grey — you may start, Mr. Crawford, but so it is!” turning towards him for an instant with a half comic look of enquiry.

“From any other person but you, I would not have borne such an assertion,” said Crawford.

“And why from me?” rejoined Charlotte.

“Look at me, and I will tell you,” was the reply. It was made in a voice that could scarcely be misunderstood.

“When a man bids a woman look at him in so grave a voice as yours, his request is seldom granted,” said she. “If I were like the generality of my sex, I should turn my head the other way — I should blush — perhaps I should sigh,” added she, with almost a laugh. “But I do neither. Yes, I will look at you.”

Charlotte turned her head towards him.

Their eyes met—there was a pause. “Yes,” continued she, after some minutes’ silence, “I repeat what I said ; Isabella is already attached to William Grey, and therefore you hate him—I know it.”

“He is *your* cousin,” said Crawford. “*You* must love him. Can I hate him then?”

“My cousin!” said Charlotte, “yes, he is my cousin!” she added in a tone of irony. “Yes, I *must* love him—that name is a passport certainly ; *my cousin*—it is a name to love!” the tone of contempt and irony was dropped. Her voice became serious and earnest. “You think, then, that Charlotte Daventry loves her cousin—loves him—loves any thing ! You think that she has love to bestow ! Yes, yes ! she did love once !” Frank Crawford started. “She has loved. Mr. Crawford, once she had a father, and to that father she gave fond, adoring, dutiful love. She gave it—she received it. Once—”

she paused —“ once she had a father ; he died. He is dead now !”—there was another pause.—Those words had been spoken slowly, calmly, impressively : they expressed the full meaning those words could convey. They expressed not only that the father was dead, but that the consciousness of his death lay heavy on the child. He was dead, and the cold, dead sense of desolation still lay chilling round her heart. “ He is dead now,” she repeated again in that same low, still voice. “ You think that I can love once more ? Aye, think so ! They all may think—they all do think I can !—and you believe it too. I know that you believe—”

“ Say any thing—suppose any thing, rather than that you cannot love !” exclaimed Crawford with vehemence. “ Say any thing but that Charlotte Daventry cannot love once more !”

“ Women have loved,” said Charlotte gently, almost tenderly. “ Women have loved, even

where the power of affection seemed extinct." She sighed ; her voice was soft, she turned her eyes on Crawford. Did a tear glisten there ? Her hand was seized—it was not withdrawn : it was pressed—it was carried to his lips.

In a few minutes, the careless, childish voice of Charlotte Daventry, the good-hearted, simple girl, might have been heard ; talking gaily and at random, wondering, pleased, and sorry. She was again the Charlotte Daventry of Weston and the Greys, as they returned to the house.

" Oh dear ! we have had such a charming walk, Mrs. Foley," said Charlotte, as she entered, her face glowing with pleasure. " I was so sorry you did not all come out ! It was really quite beautiful. But it is just dressing-time I see, and I must go and change my wet shoes."

" What a nice artless girl she is," said Mrs.

Foley, as Charlotte bounded out of the room with a light and joyous step. "So cheerful and good-tempered!"

"Yes, remarkably so," said the Dowager Duchess.

"Dear Charlotte," said Sophy Grey that night as they sat together before going to bed; "in a few more days, perhaps I shall see Lord Stoketon!"

"Yes, perhaps you will," said Charlotte, giving her a kiss; "and in a few more days Miss Grey will be engaged to marry Lord Stoketon, and then in a few more, and a few more—what will happen then, Sophy?"

"Oh dear! though," sighed Charlotte, after a moment's pause, "what shall we do without you? I am sure it must be very good-natured in me to be so glad! for what shall I do when you are gone?"

"Oh! you will do very well," said Sophy,

“and you know you must come and see me. I shall often have you with me.”

“You good, kind girl!” exclaimed Charlotte, her eyes sparkling with joy. “Will you indeed?”

“Yes, surely,” said Sophy, eagerly. “But Charlotte,” she added, “I am not married yet! and, after all, I may not be even likely to be married!”

“Oh! we shall see,” said Charlotte, archly, “a few more days will settle that—(if I was selfish, I should say)—I am afraid. I shall not have you to come and coze with before bed time then;” and Charlotte sighed a little. “But good-night,” said she, rousing herself. “I am keeping you up, and your beauty will not be so bright as usual. Good-night,” and Sophy left the room.

“Aye, good-night!” said Charlotte Daven-try to herself, and she smiled. “Go and dream

of him. Chance may befriend you, it is true! but if not—then dream in vain! Yes! a little time,” she looked at herself in the glass—“this face—there is no peculiar beauty here. And yet—these eyes,” they flashed with the thought, “have these no power? Has this wild head no bright imaginings to bless it!” she smiled as her eyes rested on her mirrored reflection—“to illumine this ordinary face, to lend a fascination—an attraction—aye, a power that guides—that leads those who think they lead? Can this tongue utter no false, insinuating, flattering words? Yes, here I behold myself—a simple, ordinary girl—and yet gifted with power to soothe and win all hearts. That enamoured fool, Frank Crawford! with all his selfish caution”—she half laughed. “He little knows that he is made a tool of Charlotte Daventry’s! He thinks I love! I meant he should, for love is blind: and if he

speaks, who would believe the story of a rejected lover? No, I am safe; his ill-nature—his want of truth are too well known. One is gained! and all shall be! All? Yes, alas! but one”—the bright glow faded from her cheek, the flashing of her eyes was quenched—they turned mournfully from the glass, on which they had rested with proud and scornful exultation—her arms fell listless by her side—“Yes, yes,” muttered she in a sad and bitter tone, “all but one, whom I could love. Aye, shame to say it! and he loves another! and I—I must look on—despair.

But no, no!” and her eyes flashed again, as she proudly gazed on the form imaged in the glass. “Does Charlotte Daventry speak of despair? no, no! I will not despair! He shall leave—forget—despise her—and she! yes—there shall the serpent sting—she *shall*—she *will* love still; and day by day she shall pine, and pine; and the fire shall be kept alive—a

skilful hand shall stir and feed the half expiring flame, when religion—aye religion, duty, pride—a woman's pride, has almost quenched that flame, the skilful hand shall raise it once more—shall revive—shall feed it. The pale cheek—the failing step—the tear—the would-be smile—the faint heart-broken smile—” She paused: the image was before her in all its life, and sad reality: she saw it, and a smile was on her lips.

“Yes,” continued she, “Revenge is sweet—Father, for you it is sweet! Yet, father”—and the smile was gone, “when the serpent stung—when he was nursed, caressed, and loved, and he prepared to sting—say, did the venom never recoil? Did he never sting himself?—Oh, father, yes—it must be so—there is a serpent here”—she pressed her hand upon her heart;—her eyes were wild—“there is a serpent, stinging, curling, gnawing here!” she

screamed—"again, again, I feel it! *Her* eyes could not have stung me so—*her* kiss"—she shuddered—"No, no! it was the serpent's sting!" But enough of this; we will no farther undraw the veil of privacy. Let us return with the morning light to the breakfast table at Chatterton.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was Sunday—the day was just remembered by one or two of the party, besides the Greys, some of the Foley's, and Mr. Temple.

“By the bye, what's the day?” said Mr. Cartwright. “Oh Sunday! very true, I thought it was.”

It was just remembered to find an excuse for not going to church. Some little ailment that had never been heard or thought of before, rendered it out of the question that they

could go to a church a quarter of a mile from the house.

“ Oh ! I would not have you think of it ! ” said Mr. Foley, in a civil manner, as if he were persuading them not to stand upon form with himself. “ The carriages are always ready on Sunday morning for any who choose to go : but I never make a point of it. I always make a rule that the servants should go. I am very strict in that respect. I hope you think we are right ? ” said he, to the Duchess.

“ Perfectly,” said her grace, hurrying over her breakfast, for she heard the hour for church was eleven.

“ Mrs. Foley and Isabella always go. Mrs. Foley thinks it right to go as an example to the lower orders. It is highly proper they should attend. It keeps them from the ale house, and from theft and murder, and all those horrible crimes incidental to the canaille.”

“ Ah,” said Mr. Temple, “ that is a truly discriminating view of our religious duties ! You know how to make distinctions, Foley.”

Mr. Foley was almost preparing to bow, delighted at a proof that the great Mr. Temple approved of what he said. He was silent, expecting more would follow, and with the blissful certainty that all the party were listening.

“ That is quite a new idea,” continued Edward Temple. “ It is certainly singular that it never should have occurred to me before, that the rich have nothing to do with prayer and praise. Now, I suppose,” said he looking towards Mr. Foley, who seemed rather puzzled, and not quite prepared for what had been said ; “ I should imagine,” continued he, with a modest, enquiring look, “ that any great man, a king for instance, or a prime minister, or a commander in chief, can have no sins to be forgiven ? I should suppose they would never say

their prayers, not even private ones, nor offer up praise and thanksgiving? Yes, I see you think so," making a sort of acknowledgment to Mr. Foley: "you hold out a high premium on exertion and talent: it is an interesting consideration indeed, and may be useful."

He stopped. No one spoke. Mr. Foley was not quite sure whether to be angry or not; but he thought it better to let it pass; so he turned to the Duchess, and talked about Mrs. Foley's new school.

"Do not you wish," said Edward Temple, turning to Anne, "that you were a king or a prime minister? You will not answer;" and then lowering his voice so that she alone could hear, "you look grave. I fear you think me wrong. You think, perhaps," continued he, anxiously, "that I ought not to have shewn my indignation? Yes—then I fear I must have been wrong. I should have restrained myself. But yet,"

continued he, "to hear any human being, and above all any educated person professing to regard religion as made for the poor alone! To imagine himself raised above the want of improvement! The self-complacency, the presumption, of supposing he needs neither instruction nor forgiveness; that he owes no gratitude for the very blessings he boasts. No, I could not let it pass as if I concurred. But I see," said he, checking himself, "that you think perhaps it is I who am most wanting in humility. I am sorry," he added in a half mortified tone, "that I did not let it pass." Anne was silent whilst Mr. Temple spoke. It had been delightful to her that he should seek her opinion; but she felt afraid of answering such an appeal, and of appearing to think that he could really desire its expression. She saw, however, he expected an answer.

"I hope you were not wrong," said she, "for if you were, I fear I must have been so

also. I believe, my only reason for looking grave, if I did so, was my dread that you should say less than you did. I felt eager that you should turn such opinions into ridicule, as I knew you could — that you should make them appear in their true light.” Anne checked herself, and the blush of eagerness turned to one of timidity, as she found she had been carried on by her feelings, and she added with some degree of confusion: “I suppose it was this which made me look grave.”

Edward Temple’s eyes had been fixed on her as she spoke, and he thought, as the glow of animation lighted up her face, that he never had beheld a being more lovely and intelligent.

Edward Temple had not spoken in vain. Many, who had not thought of church before, or who had spoken doubtfully of slight colds, slight head-aches, &c.; now found that there was nothing to prevent their attendance, and nearly

all the party went. Charlotte Daventry had complained of a cold the evening before, and Mrs. Grey would not allow her to go. Frank Crawford seldom went, and he did not go this morning. Lady Dowton could not go—she was too ill; but alas! poor soul! she might as well have been at church, for not a word of gossip did she obtain, even from Lady Caroline Fullerton.

“No,” said Charlotte Daventry to Frank Crawford, as they sat together in the drawing-room, “I will promise that William Grey shall not marry her.”

“And how must I rely on your promise, or even your power?” said Crawford. Charlotte Daventry turned her eyes upon him. They were not at that moment wild and sparkling as they had often been: but full of softness.

“Can you doubt my wish?” said she, in a half-upbraiding voice; and then in an instant

changing her look, her eyes once more flashing with animation, "can you doubt my power?"

"No, no!" said Crawford, as he gazed on her with eager admiration,— "no, no! How could I doubt it?"

"Power! what a pretty thing it is!" said Charlotte after a moment's pause, in her natural childish voice, and with her ordinary half silly manner. "How I wish I was a queen! Oh! Mr. Cartwright," said she, as he entered, "I have been wishing I were a queen. Should not you like it so much?"

"Ha, ha, ha," said Mr. Cartwright, "certainly if you were queen, I should wish to be king;" with a gay, gallant air, making a bow to Miss Daventry and her perfections.

"Oh! should you?" said Charlotte, good simple girl, quite innocent of the compliment implied. "Oh yes! I suppose so," added she, after a moment's thought of why he did not

rather wish to be a queen. "Certainly; you would wish to be a king and I a queen. Well," said she, with a bounding step out of the room; "I must go and look for Lady Dowton, and see whether she has quite killed Lady Caroline with talking. Good-bye, Mr. Crawford." She cast a comic half-despairing look at him as she left the room. Mr. Cartwright had turned the other way.

"Miss Daventry," said Crawford, following her. "Miss Daventry," — she hesitated: he followed her out of the room. "Miss Daventry you will walk with me?" said he, in an imploring tone and manner. "Do not refuse. I cannot bear to be refused by you. I cannot bear to be away from you. Say you will walk with me, as it seems that in the house we are to be interrupted every minute by some officious simpleton or other."

"Mr. Crawford," said Charlotte, in a very

quiet voice, and with a very demure look, "I told you and Mr. Cartwright that I was going to Lady Dowton. I do not know why you should doubt my word;" and she almost ran away, humming the air of a song Lady Emily Harville had sung the evening before. Crawford looked after her as she went.

"That girl has a power to torment," thought he, "but then what a heaven to be certain of her love!—to know she loved one, as such a being might love! Can she know how her careless manner torments? Yes, yes, she knows her power!" and Crawford returned to the room.

"Why, what's the matter Crawford?" said Mr. Cartwright. "Ten thousand furies are in your face—the true reflection of a woman's frowns! So the girl frowned at you, did she, and bid you go back? Aye! she can smile though!" added he, with a complacent look at himself, as he adjusted his cravat by the glass.

“Furies!” said Crawford,” “do you mean to insinuate that she smiles on such——” he checked himself: he thought of the madness of exposing his feelings to a man like Mr. Cartwright. He compressed his lips firmly together, as if to prevent the rage that boiled within from bursting forth. He threw himself on a chair, and was silent.

“Come, my dear fellow,” said Mr. Cartwright, rather alarmed by the effect of his words, and not wishing to have a quarrel with a man like Frank Crawford, “come my dear fellow, you know my little jokes. Well, I am going out for a walk,” said he, as he received no answer, and trying to look careless, he walked out of the room.

“The safest course;” said he to himself. “I meant nothing. The girl *has* smiles—it’s true enough; and smiles for me too, let Crawford think what he pleases; and who was to

know that he was smitten? Who indeed would ever have thought that Crawford could be smitten — it's astonishing! However, no one heard him, and he did not finish the sentence. There was no occasion for me to guess what he meant to say!" and Mr. Cartwright walked away his sense of the affront in a pleasant ramble round the grounds at Chatterton, till the church bells ringing told him the party would be returned from church, and then he also bent his steps toward the house, for there was safety in numbers.

This was the last evening to be spent at Chatterton. On the morrow the party was going to break up. How many were sorry, or how many were glad, it would be difficult to say! for who can judge what feeling lurks under those civil words of leave-taking, those hopes with smiles of meeting again, those regrets with sighs at parting? Some may ask

themselves “when shall we meet again?” to say and think “I do not care how long it may be;” some to hope that meeting may be soon, to sigh that it may be long delayed—aye, perhaps, for ever! Some may ask “when shall we meet again?” and the answer will sound like a knell, “perhaps never more!” that ‘good-bye’ may press mournfully on the heart, that parting cause the inward groan; and the blood rushes swiftly to the face in the struggle to repress the tears so ready to burst forth. Some may ask “when shall we meet again?” and, as they look their last on those gentle sorrowful eyes, and hear the soft good-bye, to some it says, “when those eyes will no longer look kindly, when that soft voice will no longer speak in fondness, when time will have changed that heart—then shall we meet again!” Some may ask “when shall we meet again?” to answer with melancholy foreboding, “when

sorrow has been—when happiness, the careless joy of heart, is gone—when those whom now we see and hear, whom we have loved from the days of childhood even till now—when the young, the beautiful, the glad—when they are cold and still, are lost to us for ever—when we are grown old in feeling—when the ties that bound us to earth are gone—then shall we meet again !”

“When shall we meet again ?” Yes, there is sadness in those words, even in gay careless partings when spoken in gaiety and happiness. There is something that may make us think and moralize, and ask ourselves shall we ever meet again ? for the grave lies near us, and the hand of death may now be upon us, upon them ; and another day—another hour may not be ours, or theirs ; and we may never meet again !

CHAPTER IX.

ON that last evening at Chatterton, and on the following morning, Edward Temple conversed with Charlotte Daventry.

“She has either better sense, and better feelings, or greater artifice and power of dissimulation than I gave her credit for,” thought he, when it was over. When alone that night in his room he remained deep in thought for some time. “I wish it were otherwise,” said he, half aloud. “If it is not so, how dangerous to her disposition—to her happiness!”

Anne wished Mr. Temple good-bye in the pleasing hope that ere long she might see him again. The preceding evening she heard her father invite him to Weston. Mr. Temple accepted the invitation with evident pleasure, and turned, for an instant, to look at her as he did so. If Anne did not feel happy she ought to have done so ; and if her pleased, her almost grateful look at her father when a few minutes after he approached and laid his hand affectionately on her shoulder, may be accepted as a proof, it is certain that she did feel happy.

As she drove home the next day and heard her father speaking in the highest terms of Mr. Temple, she felt that it was almost worth while to be separated from him for the satisfaction of listening to his praises, and for the pleasure of looking forward to meeting him again.

And what were the feelings of some of those left at Chatterton ? George Foley had seen that Anne Grey preferred Edward Temple. He was not sure of Mr. Temple's feelings towards her, and he believed that however much he might admire her, it was probable that, as a fastidious self-adoring man of the world, he would regard matrimony in the light of a sacrifice. He thought highly of Edward Temple in many respects ; not only of his talents but of his feelings and principles. Still as he was a man of the world, he thought that self might triumph even over Anne Grey in the heart of Edward Temple. With such an opinion, independent of all selfish sorrow, he watched with pain the growth of her affection for him : he feared that she might hereafter have cause to grieve that she had ever become acquainted with Edward Temple. He longed for the privilege of putting her on her guard, for whilst he acquitted Tem-

ple of premeditated deceit, he knew the power of self, he knew the many excuses too easy to be found for all that is pleasing, amusing, or interesting, where selfishness is at hand to prompt.

In this view of Edward Temple's probable conduct, there was much that might have been gratifying to George Foley; but if it did encourage him in a hope that, with steady perseverance and patience on his part, he might one day secure for himself the affections of Anne; he was too amiable not to grieve most sincerely, for anything which could occasion distress to her feelings. It would, perhaps, be uncharitable to pry too far into his heart, or to define too exactly the degrees of sorrow or joy he experience. Suffice it to say that, whilst he felt sorrow for her, he almost dared to trust with a fond, pleasing, yet uncertain hope to the happiness of one day calling her his own.

“My dear,” said Mrs. Grey to Anne, that evening at Weston, “what a very nice young man Mr. George Foley is. I like him better than ever!”

“He is a very sensible good sort of fellow!” said William, and this was high praise from him.

“Yes, I thought so,” said Mrs. Grey, looking with delight at him. “I always thought so. You see, my dear,” turning to Anne with her very happiest smile, “that William says he is a very sensible man—a very good sort of young man.”

“I said ‘fellow,’ ma’am,” interrupted William.

“Ah, yes,” said Mrs. Grey unchecked by the interruption. “He is indeed a very delightful young man, and Mr. Grey always says so. He talked a good deal to you, Anne!”

“Yes,” said Anne, “and he is one to whom I always like to talk;” she even added a few

words more in his praise, and Mrs. Grey was so pleased at her warmth of approval that she sat smiling at her as she spoke, and said, "very true, my dear Anne, that's very sensible:" when she had done.

William laughed and said, "Very judicious praise you give your daughters, ma'am! I hope you will praise me whenever I make a spirited *éloge* of any young lady of my acquaintance. Come, Anne, you shall be Mrs. George Foley, if you'll be a good girl!"

"My dear William!" said Anne, looking at him with surprise and a little annoyed. "My dear William, what nonsense you are talking!"

"Yes, yes, my dear," said Mrs. Grey, looking delighted at the nonsense, but rather alarmed lest it should have a bad effect and put Anne too much on her guard with Mr. George Foley. "Yes, yes, my dear, it is only his little

joke. Come, William, we will have no more of this nonsense: you know its all a joke ! ”

“ I never thought it was anything else, ma’am,” said William ; “ and after all there is no joke equal to two people falling in love and marrying.”

“ Your mother and I thought so, William, thirty years ago,” said Mr. Grey smiling.

“ Seven-and-twenty, my dear ! ” said Mrs. Grey. “ Seven-and-twenty this day three weeks.”

“ Well then, I’ll have another cup of tea if you please, ma’am,” said William, “ in honour of what is to be commemorated this day three weeks, and a little stronger than the last if you can afford it. Did you read ——’s speech in the paper to-day, Sir ? ” said he, to his father, whilst Mrs. Grey was murmuring to herself about nerves and “ actually as strong as coffee,” and endeavouring to make weak tea look strong by filling William’s cup quite full.

But here we must leave the domestic circle at Weston, to turn to one small comfortable sitting-room of Isabella Foley's in the large rambling house at Chatterton. There we find George Foley and herself seated for a fire-side coze, neither of them quite so much at ease as usual in their confidential fire-side talks, when all thoughts and feelings were usually avowed and discussed between the brother and sister.

They were neither of them quite at ease, for each had something they wished to confess, yet each scarce knew how to begin.

"The Greys are very agreeable people," said George, looking at his boots.

"Charlotte Daventry is a very nice girl," said Isabella, reaching a hand-screen; whether to shade her face from the fire, or from observation, I do not know.

"How pretty Miss Grey is," said George, just looking at Isabella to see what she thought

of that ; but Isabella did not look that way, and her face was so screened that he could gather nothing from it. “ I think some people might call her prettier than her sister.”

George Foley was touching delicate ground : he paused, hoping to have gained something.

“ Yes, certainly,” said Isabella, not exactly knowing what she was saying, “ yes certainly, much prettier ! ”

“ Do you think so ? ” said George, his caution all gone at hearing her assent to such an opinion.

“ Oh ! I fancied you thought so,” said Isabella, finding she had not answered quite right, yet knew not why. “ Miss Grey is rather,” —hesitating a little and putting her screen still nearer to her face, “ Miss Grey is rather—I think she is a little—perhaps like her brother.”

“ Yes, very,” said George, returning Isabella’s compliment by answering something to which he had not attended.

“No, do you think so?” said Isabella, roused at last, as George had been. “I cannot say, I think so very like—scarcely indeed,” she added, getting animated in defence of William Grey’s good or bad looks, “scarcely indeed, I should say, any likeness at all.”

“Oh! I beg your pardon,” said George, recollecting himself. “I misunderstood you: I thought you were saying how like William Grey was to his sister. I only agreed with you. I really never thought much about it.”

“William Grey is a very agreeable person,” said Isabella, turning away.

“Yes, he is a good rattling sort of fellow, rather blunt and bearish, I think; but clever, and I dare say good-hearted.”

“Do you think he is so very blunt and bearish, George?” asked Isabella. “Blunt, to be sure he is, and I like that sort of bluntness. One sees there is no deceit: but I do not think

he is bearish! It is unjust to call him bearish," added she rather warmly.

"Well, my dear Bell, I did not mean to say anything against him. I think he is a good, manly, open-hearted fellow, with a great deal of shrewdness and good sense, some quiet humour, and appreciation of humour in others, with rather too little consideration for the feelings of others, and rather too fond of self."

"No, not quite that," murmured Isabella very softly, and not meaning it to be quite audible.

"But I did not know, Bell, that you would care whether I praised William Grey or not?"

"No, indeed," said Isabella, with a determined effort to avail herself of this opening.

"No, indeed, I dare say you did not. Indeed I don't know why I should care," and poor Isabella got very much confused, sighed, and looked from behind her screen at the fire, saw nothing in the fire to help her, and at last made

one more desperate effort to tell her brother at once, how much she was interested in William Grey's character; and how she feared he did not care for her; and how Charlotte Daventry, who was such a dear good girl, was so fond of him and praised him so much!

George listened with great seriousness, and with great interest, just as a brother should listen to such a confession from a sister.

"I know I ought not to love him," said Isabella, "for I have no reason to suppose it reciprocal—if he even likes me, it is but as a mere acquaintance—a pleasing girl, perhaps," said she blushing as she spoke, and hesitating.

George was grave as he listened to Isabella: to own the truth, he was sincerely sorry to hear her confession. He saw that she was more seriously attached to William Grey than he had wished to believe; for, with a character

such as hers, attachment could not be that light, changeable sentiment it might be with others. He had heard of William Grey's admiration for Jane Graham, which rendered it peculiarly unlikely that he should return his sister's affection. George thought it right to tell his sister what he knew on this subject. It was a disagreeable task to dispel any pleasing illusion that might have dwelt in her mind. Still it was right so to do, and Isabella bore the intelligence better than her brother had expected; she had had so little hope, that it was less disappointment to hear that he already loved another than it might otherwise have proved. Besides, it was not quite certain; and might she not still allow herself to look forward to time to effect what she desired?

It now became George's turn to confess; and he had soon acquainted Isabella of his love for Anne Grey, and of her apparent preference

for Edward Temple. Isabella in her turn listened and looked grave.

“Yes,” said George Foley, “I love Anne Grey !”

“I am sorry for it,” said Isabella sadly, looking down with a discomposed air. George fixed his eyes upon her inquiringly, as if to see whether there were any other reason for this regret than that which he himself had mentioned.

“Yes, indeed, dear Bella, I thought you would pity me. I knew you must be sorry because there is so much hopelessness in the case.”

“But, George,” said Isabella gravely, “it is not for that only, but I am sorry on every account that you should love Anne Grey.” George looked at her in surprise. “I shall distress you, dear George,” she said looking at him sorrowfully : “it seems we are fated to-day to say unpleasant things to one another.”

George reddened with alarm as Isabella spoke. He looked anxiously at her, begged her to go on, and Isabella then told him all that she had learned from Charlotte Daventry concerning the disposition of Anne, and her own reasons for believing that it was true. She described Charlotte Daventry's manner about the music—all that had dropped from her at various times, both with regard to Anne, to Mr. Grey, and to all the family—and her praises of William were not forgotten.

George listened: he leant his head on his hand; he was painfully intent on what his sister said. When she told him that Charlotte Daventry had betrayed that Anne was jealous of her doing anything better than herself, he interrupted her by exclaiming, "Jealous! jealous of another's accomplishments! No, that is a mistake! That is not true!" When she told him of Anne's temper—of her want of

feeling and consideration for her—of her dissimulation, he again exclaimed, “No, no,” then again was quiet, and by a sign bid Isabella continue. But when she had done—when she had said all—had expressed her detestation of such a character as Anne Grey’s—had implied her conviction that her brother must soon, if not at once, look with equal detestation on such a deceitful character—when she spoke of her love and pity for Charlotte Daventry, he no longer restrained himself—he was no longer silent.

He started up, and bursting forth in a tone of mingled anger and agitation, exclaimed, “Do not say that again, Isabella! Do not repeat that you love, that you admire Charlotte Daventry! You are not to blame—I do not blame you—you have been deceived; but never talk to me again of loving the person who could speak ill of Anne Grey! Whoever breathed a

word against her has uttered a falsehood! I would stake my life that it is false; and Isabella, I bid you beware of the person who could defame such a character!" He walked out of the room unable to repress his indignation.

"He is gone!" said Isabella sadly. "I have grieved—offended him! and yet if Charlotte Daventry should be right! what else could I have done? And yet if Charlotte Daventry is deceitful?" the colour rushed to her face, "I have trusted her! Oh! if George is right? It may be so!" she sighed. "How unhappy either way! Dear George! He was angry. I never saw him angry with me before. Oh! how I wish I had never known Charlotte Daventry!" and Isabella Foley leant her head on her hand, and burst into tears.

"Isabella," said George, as he came into her room before they separated for the night; "I am afraid I was cross with you. I was

angry at the time. Will you forgive me?" laying his hand on hers.

"Dear George," said Isabella, her face brightening with pleasure, "how glad I am to hear you speak so to me again! Indeed there is nothing for me to forgive! But I have been very unhappy. I wish we had never come to Chatterton, George! Do not you? I wish we had never known any of them!" looking up at him, with the tears standing in her eyes.

"No, dear Bella," said George, "I cannot wish that. We shall find yet much happiness here I dare say; and as to the Greys—" after a pause—"that perhaps will all be well in time. But I want to speak to you about that, Isabella. I was unjust to you before, but I was not quite myself. I could not be calm to hear Anne Grey traduced. I firmly believe that it is false—there is some mistake. I will not blame any one till I know where it is deserved. I have

been suffering the last few hours in thinking of my injustice to you. You may have misunderstood Miss Daventry's words, or there may be something we do not understand. I do not wish to judge harshly of any one; still there is something I do not quite like about her. Of course you are aware that Frank is in love with her. Every one must remark that; and I know it is so, not only from what he said himself, but from something Cartwright told me: however that is less to the purpose. But there is something strange in her manner about this: in short, Bella dear, I do not wish you should place too much confidence in her. I had doubts before, and all you have told me has but helped to confirm them. It is utterly impossible that Anne Grey should be what she would represent; and I do not believe that Mr. Grey would ever be guilty of the faults of which she accuses him."

“She did not exactly accuse,” interposed Isabella. “She only let fall things.”

“It is the same thing,” said George: “you must either have heard wrongly, interpreted wrongly, or she could not have been aware what she was saying; or, Isabella, I fear there is another alternative. Consider a little. Is it not rather strange, that, short as your acquaintance with Miss Daventry has been, she should have already contrived to let fall so many things by accident, against the characters and dispositions of those with whom she lives? That, with all the cleverness, the sensibility, the feeling, of which you tell me she is possessed, she should still have been so weak, unguarded, and I should say, so ungenerous, as to let out to you in the course of a four days’ visit, so many circumstances to the disadvantage of her nearest relatives? Would not any girl with a particle of common sense, or of good feeling, have con-

trived to keep them to herself? You say her manner, when she talked to you alone, was so different from her usual one, that you do not believe her to be childish and thoughtless, as she appears. What then does this prove? If she is not really light and thoughtless, where is her excuse? Do you see nothing suspicious—nothing contradictory in this?"

Isabella considered—looked doubtful, and at length said, "Certainly it is strange: it never struck me so before—but then, George, Charlotte Daventry is unlike other people. She is so natural! She does not consider what she is saying."

"That is a good excuse with some people," said George, "for saying every thing that is most ill-natured, and for concealing nothing that, for the sake of others, ought to be concealed."

"But she never professed to be natural," said Isabella.

“No, she had no occasion to profess. She left no one in doubt of her being what is called a ‘natural character.’ A natural character, Isabella, sometimes is but another word for an artificial one. I will not as yet say positively it is so with her. There may be some mistake; but I have my doubts. Her manner is very variable: she may be an excellent actress. I sometimes almost feel that she is constantly acting a part.”

“Acting a part!” said Isabella, looking astonished. “Oh no! that cannot be!”

“If you had seen her one morning as I did,” said George, “perhaps you would not be so surprised. I happened to come into the room when she and Frank were sitting together. They did not observe me enter. Her manner—her look then, Isabella, was different to what you have ever seen it—in short”—he paused a moment—“in short, Bella, do not make a

friend of Charlotte Daventry. I have noticed the coldness of your manner to the Miss Greys, and they noticed it, I am sure. I was surprised and sorry to perceive it. Try to think differently about them. Try to find out for yourself: that is the best way, after all. A character may generally be discovered by study. I will try too. I will not be blinded to the faults even of Anne Grey, if she has any: it has distressed me much to hear even an imputation cast on her, of the falsehood of which I can obtain no immediate proof: yet I could almost stake my life that it is false. Let us, however, both be on our guard. We need not trust too implicitly, nor blame too easily;—and now, good-night, dear Bella. You have forgiven me I hope?”

“Forgiven you! It is I who have to be forgiven;” and they separated with their wonted kindness and affection.

George Foley retired to rest, to think whe-

ther there could be a fault in Anne Grey, and to come to the happy conclusion that there was not one; and Isabella retired to rest to think whether, if Charlotte Daventry had spoken untruly of all the rest of the Greys, she might not still have spoken the truth of William; and to convince herself that all that had been uttered in his praise must be true. Thus did George and Isabella both fall asleep, having mentally settled their mutual questions in the way people always settle all questions for or against their wishes—the way most pleasing to themselves.

CHAPTER X.

WE once more return to Weston, just as the Miss Greys and Charlotte Daventry have retired to their rooms. "I am glad you are come," said Charlotte to Anne, as she entered her room, and they seated themselves over the fire, "for I have not had a coze with you for such an age! and I have a great deal I want to say to you. I want to speak to you of *him*;" looking archly at Anne. "Yes of him—you know who?"

“No,” said Anne, belying her assertion by a deep blush.

“No!” said Charlotte; “but that blush, my own Anne, says ‘yes.’ Yes! I want to talk to you about Mr. Temple.”

“Ah!” said Anne, not looking very much surprised notwithstanding her ‘no;’ “I thought no one would have found that out!”

“I have only found out one thing,” said Charlotte; “that Mr. Temple is in love with you: farther I do not know.”

“Nor so far, indeed,” said Anne, looking very happy, “for it is probably not the case.”

“Not the case!” said Charlotte, with a tone of astonishment. “Do you mean to be so *very* modest as to doubt the truth of that? No, Anne, he loves you—that is certain, and what I wish to say is, that I congratulate you upon your conquest! I longed to tell you what I thought of him.—I longed to tell you that you were sometimes so cold in your manner to him, I feared

you would frighten him away ; and I would not have you lose him for the world ! No, Anne, I think him so perfect that I have set my heart on seeing you married to him. Yes, it would so grieve me if he should go away mortified by your coldness, and perhaps marry some other person whose manner was less indifferent."

"Charlotte," said Anne, looking half alarmed, yet half pleased, "you forget what every one says, or perhaps you have never heard it—that Mr. Temple is not a marrying man."

"Oh ! but he is—he must be ! No man, so good as he is, could behave so ill as to fall in love—"

"Nay, Charlotte," said Anne, laughing, "you may allow a person to fall in love if he cannot help it ?"

"No, I will not," said Charlotte. "No man like him would behave so ill as to let himself fall in love, and make love to a girl, and be so

attentive to her, without meaning to marry. No, Mr. Temple is superior to this ! I cannot think so ill of him as you would do, Anne."

"*I think ill of him !*" exclaimed Anne : "but, indeed," continued she, after a moment's pause ; "I should have no reason—no particular reason, for blaming him if he had never meant anything—if he married any one else to-morrow," sighing. "He never said anything you know, Charlotte, to bind me—never asked—never—"

"Oh yes ! I know what you mean, Anne. He never said 'Will you marry me?' no ; but he said a great deal that meant the same ; and in short, Anne, I do hope you will marry him some day. You think me careless and foolish, and so I am sometimes,—I know I am ; but I *can* feel and think seriously, and I have not seen you and Mr. Temple together without very great interest, and when none of the others saw it—

no, not even Sophy, for you know she said once she believed Mr. Temple rather admired her—”

“ Did she ? ” said Anne, starting. Charlotte took no notice and went on.

“ When none of them saw it, I found it out ; and I have watched him, and tried to study his character, and I see that he loves you,—that he is worthy of you—that he could understand and appreciate you, as few others can, and my whole heart is set upon your marrying him. Yes ! though I seem such a careless, giddy girl, when I really love people I can find out things that others do not — perhaps because they do not care so much ! ”

“ Dear Charlotte, ” said Anne, affectionately, how warm-hearted and kind you are ! But you think too highly of me, I fear, and too much of Mr. Temple’s preference for me. Indeed it is not likely to be more than merely a slight preference. He is never likely to think seriously

of me, and instead of encouraging myself to become more attached to him, I should try all I can to resist the feeling. But I must go, Charlotte. I must not let an interesting subject make me keep you up all night. So good night dear."

"Breathes there the girl with heart so dead,
Who never to herself hath said,

this is the very person I should prefer to all others if he would only fall in love with me? No, no, there is not such a person," said Charlotte to herself, as Anne left the room, "No—even the meek, retiring Anne Grey is caught; aye, fairly caught! and she may struggle and struggle, and never will she get that little constant heart out of the web in which it is so nicely entangled! Never whilst Charlotte Daventry lives. No, my pretty fly, let the spider run round and round you, and drop a sugared word—a sugared tone now and then to

amuse you, whilst it makes each thread the tighter : yes—the spider shall draw it each day tighter — harder — and the venom meanwhile shall drop into its veins—drop by drop. It shall be carefully instilled, and there the poor struggling heart shall remain, and the spider shall entwine and triumph :” the picture was too delightful. Charlotte Daventry smiled,—that peculiar smile gleamed through her eyes. “ And there it shall remain,” she continued, “ till its struggling is over—till it is broken—till it is cold and still. Yes—pretty, gay and gladsome thing—flutter awhile—you know not what is in store for you ! What ! does she think that Charlotte Daventry will rejoice to see him marry *her*. To see him love her ? No ! I can prize that love, and I claim it ! It shall be mine—it shall never be Anne Grey’s.”

She clasped her hands together, as she uttered these words : she stood firm, erect.

Proudly she drew herself up; determination, and fixed resolve were painted in her countenance—her very form—her very attitude! She stood for a moment thus, but then a mournful thought passed through her mind, and all was changed; her figure no longer retained its firm erectness; her head was no longer proudly raised in triumph; her hands no longer clasped. No—one moment and all was gone.

“He loves her,” murmured she. “He loves me not. He scorns me!” and she rested her head mournfully on her hand, whilst the tears slowly and silently streamed down her cheek.

Anne had quitted her cousin that night with the thought so strongly impressed on her mind that if ever she should marry, she would like to marry exactly such a person as Mr. Temple, that, for once in her life, she behaved like a heroine and dreamt of the hero! She dreamt she was sitting in the library at Weston, that

Edward Temple walked in—that he was going to put out his hand—that he looked delighted to see her. She felt the glow of pleasure through her heart, at his look and manner, when suddenly Charlotte Daventry appeared—she snatched away his hand just as she was extending her own: his face and manner was changed—he frowned on her—he looked at Charlotte with kindness—with that look with which he had so often regarded her: he again turned towards herself: it was with dislike; Charlotte looked at her too, and her look was one of scorn and hatred. She was going to speak—to ask her why she so regarded her: she made an effort and awoke.

“What a horrid dream!” thought Anne, and she could scarcely shake it from her mind: it still kept recurring, and she actually started when she heard Charlotte Daventry’s voice, and felt her hand on her shoulder. She almost

expected to behold the same horrid face that she had witnessed in her dream.

And what were Edward Temple's thoughts during this time? Had he any terrible dreams? Not one; but, as he found himself alone that evening at Temple-court—had walked across the pillared hall, had passed through the spacious drawing-room, entered the large gallery-like library, and brought out of it the book he wanted, and looked, as he returned, at the deserted drawing-room, observed the melancholy appearance of the tables without work, drawings, or any female occupations to give the room its air of comfort; returned to his own snug room, seated himself in his comfortable arm chair, opened his book, stirred the fire, and settled himself to the intellectual delights of solitary reading; what shall we say to a sensible, clever, intellectual hero, when we know that, instead of going steadily with mind

and eye through the first page of his book, he actually let the one wander to the fire—the other still farther?

As he sat there in his own large splendid house, with everything indicative of wealth about him, all to be enjoyed alone, for a moment a vision passed across his mind; a gentle being presented herself to his imagination—a gentle being with a low-toned voice, soft blue eyes, and graceful figure; he thought of a light and noiseless tread, a joyous laugh, a ready smile, a ready tear, quick intelligence, conversational powers, a cultivated mind, and elegance of thought; he thought of a being to look to him with fond affection, to be ever near him, to become attentive as he spoke, to warm into enthusiasm as she listened, to reveal to him the rich stores of her mind—to infuse her charm, her taste, her cheerfulness into everything around him—to give to the lonely house a look of comfort and

of occupation—to sing, to laugh, to talk, to be sad with him, and to love him : yes—to love as she alone could love: and in return to be prized—beloved—adored. The vision for a moment passed across his mind—a gentle, affectionate being—a wife. It was a vision of Anne Grey. Only for a moment—and then—the leaf of the book was turned — another, and another—and Edward Temple was once more deep in his intellectual delights.

CHAPTER XI.

“ WHO can that be, come so early ?” said Mrs. Grey, as she heard the door bell ring !

“ Oh ! some one on business to Papa, I suppose, said Sophy ; and on she went with a difficult passage in her music, which she had vainly tried three times to conquer. One finger always came in that brilliant run where the other finger ought to have come, and that one little finger set all the others wrong. Might we not moralize on this, and say how

one little fault sometimes sets a whole character wrong—sets all our actions wrong—causes the misfortunes of our future life? One slight fault fires the train of our misfortunes ; and then, in quick succession, one calamity causes another—all from one slight error in the outset.

But we leave the reader to moralize farther if he likes, whilst we usher in the early visitor to Mr. Grey, and introduce him as Lord Stoketon.

“ Lord Stoketon !” exclaimed Mr. Grey.

“ Yes,” said Lord Stoketon in a hurried, agitated manner, half turning his head away, as he received Mr. Grey’s hearty shake of the hand—“ Yes, you could not expect me ! I did not expect to find myself here !” and he seated himself without seeming to know what he was doing. Mr. Grey was alarmed—he saw that Lord Stoketon was in great agitation. A

thought of his son rushed through his mind. He waited almost breathless, for him to speak.

“ Would to God I had no cause for coming so !” said Lord Stoketon, “ for coming with such a different motive to that to which I had so fondly looked forward ! Mr. Grey ! I am going to distress you.

Mr. Grey laid hold of a chair. He looked eagerly at Lord Stoketon ; “ any illness ?” he murmured, scarcely audibly.”

“ No, no,” nothing of that kind ! Good God ! what a fool I have been !” as he saw Mr. Grey turn pale. “ No—no ! no illness—no death !”

“ Thank God !” uttered Mr. Grey, as he looked at Lord Stoketon, and tried to smile, saying “ I was foolish to be so much alarmed—but a father—” continued he, half smiling, “ a father always dreads some calamity to his children when they are not all around him. I thought of my boy ! It was a father’s folly.”

Lord Stoketon buried his face in his hands, and for a minute he was unable to speak. “Mr. Grey,” said he at length raising his head, “you spoke of a father’s feelings. I am come to wound those feelings—and yet I have a hope—but I must not speak of that. I come on the part of a friend, to accuse Miss Grey of spreading malicious reports against his character, and that of those most dear to him—for the purpose of breaking off his union, and—” speaking with great effort—“because she herself was attached to him. I come to ask you to make Miss Grey retract these unfortunate assertions”—he paused in strong emotion. “I did think to come for a very different purpose,” he added mournfully—“to ask your permission—but—I must not think of what I had hoped to come for ! Mr. Grey, if you can say that all that is alleged is false you will indeed make me happy !”

Mr. Grey changed colour as Lord Stoketon spoke : when first he mentioned his daughter's name he had looked indignant, and was inclined to interrupt him ; but he checked himself, and allowed him to continue ; but when Lord Stoketon stopped, and appealed to him, he replied with evident emotion :

“ Lord Stoketon, you have brought an accusation against my daughter which, if made lightly—if made unjustly—I warn you candidly, it had been better you should never have made. It had been better for any man to have deliberated before he came to accuse a daughter to her father,” said he, proudly. “ But I do not believe that you mean to speak unkindly. I believe that it grieves you to say this to me—that you think there is reason for believing it. God knows how you came to believe such a thing !”

Lord Stoketon suddenly raised his head as

Mr. Grey uttered these last words. "Lord Stoketon," continued he, "here is my hand, in token that towards you I feel no anger,—that my indignation is not against you." Lord Stoketon took the hand, as it was given, with emotion. He almost sobbed as he unclasped it, turned away his head, and again concealed his face.

"But," continued Mr. Grey, "that I do feel indignation—the greatest indignation, I will not deny. I believe that my daughter is innocent of all she is accused. If there has been malice, it has been from some other quarter. Sophy never harboured a malicious—an ungenerous feeling in her heart! She is quite innocent—utterly so!"

Lord Stoketon turned towards Mr. Grey as he spoke thus firmly and proudly. He looked at him for a moment, then seizing his hand, exclaimed "Thank you—thank you for that!"

Heaven bless you, Sir ! I knew it was false—I knew it must be—I knew Sophy Grey was innocent !”

Mr. Grey was affected, and he could only thank Lord Stoketon, at the moment, by the cordial pressure of his hand. There was a pause, for both parties were affected, and for a few minutes unable to speak. Mr. Grey was the first to break the silence, and it was to ask Lord Stoketon for further information.

I need not repeat all that passed ; but briefly relate the circumstances which had caused this abrupt and painful interview. It may be remembered that a marriage was talked of between Maria Pemberton and Frederick Barton. The reader may also remember the ill-natured remarks of Lady Dowton, at which Sophy had laughed ; and which were afterwards repeated by Charlotte Daventry with some addition concerning Lord Stoketon, just

to amuse herself and Mr. Crawford, one morning at Lady Dowton's expense. At the time, Charlotte Daventry could have had little idea of the serious results which would arise from what she probably viewed as an innocent amusement.

Frederic Barton was a friend of Lord Stoke-ton's. He was a young man of good principles, with warm and steady feelings : a mutual attachment existed between himself and Maria Pemberton. Maria Pemberton was plain, but agreeable, clever, accomplished, and amiable, with as much good sense as a large share of romance would allow. She had a mother who loved, and almost idolized her, and Maria Pemberton loved, and idolized in return. Had she been a beauty, every one would have raved of her enthusiasm ; but she was plain, and people found out that her romance was rather silly.

When Frederic Barton proposed to her, she thought of her mother: she loved him, but she could not bear to leave her fond mother; and she made some excuse to delay the marriage for a year or two. The world meantime had nothing to do but to talk and wonder, and such reasons were invented for the delay as we have already heard from Lady Dowton.

These reasons had been refuted by Sophy Grey, but again repeated by Charlotte Daven-try, as proceeding from Sophy, and again circulated by Lady Dowton, not only with the additions regarding Lord Stoketon, but with another, of Sophy's supposed attachment to Mr. Barton.

The calumny against her mother, and herself, came to the ears of Maria Pemberton. She was indignant, for her mother's sake. With a character such as hers, where high-wrought feeling was apt to take the place of sounder

judgment, her course may be conceived. She concealed the truth from her mother, but immediately resolved to break off her engagement as the surest means of contradicting these reports. To none but Mr. Barton did she allege her reason. In vain he tried to dissuade her from such a cruel and useless measure. She was determined, and the greater the sacrifice, the more did she glory in it for the sake of her mother, on whom she thus inflicted pain by her efforts to defend her.

It was at this time, and shortly after the visit to Hilton, that Frederic Barton had seen Lord Stoketon, and had confided to him the cause of his unhappiness. Lord Stoketon's distress may be conceived, as he listened to the most circumstantial details of the unamiable character of the woman he loved; but he immediately resolved to restore the happiness of his friend though his own was gone. He told

Mr. Barton of his intentions, received his hearty expressions of gratitude, and set off to Weston in a pitiable state of agitation and distress.

He travelled all night, and reached Weston the next morning. Worn out with the tumult of his feelings, he was unable to be calm and composed as he had intended; but he concealed nothing from Mr. Grey: he actually sobbed with joy as Mr. Grey repeated his assurance, with a manner, in which there was no deceit, that he believed the accusation against Sophy to be altogether false. But Mr. Grey would not allow it to rest on his conviction alone. Sophy must be questioned, and the origin of the report, if possible, discovered.

Lord Stoketon left Weston after a two hours' conversation with Mr. Grey, and was to remain at the neighbouring town till he heard again from him. He would not trust himself to remain in the house and to see Miss Grey, till he

knew on what footing he might meet her ; but he left Weston in a state of comparative bliss to that in which he had entered it. He believed, lover-like, almost before a word had been said in her favour, that Sophy must be innocent. He was convinced, the moment he saw Mr. Grey, and heard him speak of a father's feelings.— Yes, Mr. Grey could not have spoken so, had not his daughter been as amiable as Lord Stoketon fondly imagined.

What followed his departure at Weston will be imagined. Mr. Grey sent for Sophy, told her all that had passed, and her unfeigned astonishment, no less than her assurances of innocence, were sufficient to convince her father, had he needed to be convinced, that it was as he hoped. Then followed the indignation, the sorrow, the dismay, and the surmises of how her name could have been connected with these calumnies. Sophy remembered Lady Dowton's

story—remembered repeating it some time after to Charlotte as a proof of the absurd gossip of Lady Dowton. Sophy was farther questioned as to what she had ever said about Lord Stoketon, and was no less surprised at finding how much she had been misrepresented; earnestly affirmed it was utterly untrue, was very unhappy, cried a great deal, and, when her father told her she had brought some of this upon herself by her inclination to gossip, she cried still more, and expressed her contrition—then asked what was to be done, looked at her father for assistance, and with bitter tears and sobs anxiously enquired whether Lord Stoketon was really gone — gone in anger, believing her capable of such wickedness.

Anne pitied Sophy to her heart—heard with indignation the charge against her — and, till she heard her father speak of his distress, she was even indignant with Lord Stoketon himself for having believed it.

We will not dwell on all that followed— suffice it to say, that, in a short time from his first painful visit at Weston, Lord Stoketon had the joy of seeing Maria Pemberton and Frederic Barton once more engaged to each other, and of finding himself again on his road to Weston.

Lord Stoketon arrived ; Sophy saw him for a moment, left her mother and Anne to amuse one another, and then walked out alone whilst he and Mr. Grey were engaged in conversation. Perhaps Lord Stoketon began to grow inattentive, for Mr. Grey smiled, and said, “ Perhaps you will like to walk ? ”

Lord Stoketon’s answer was not quite audible ; he was out of the room before Mr. Grey had even time to apologize for not accompanying him. Mrs. Grey’s eyes wandered towards the window, and she had the comfort of seeing that Sophy was no longer alone, and she looked so happy

that Mr. Grey caught the infection, smiled most good-humouredly, gave Anne a kiss, and said, as he patted her cheek, "Sad work this, Miss Anne!" and the work was so sad that he smiled again as he said, "Take care of yourself, Anne. I cannot afford to part with you too."

We will leave it to the reader's imagination to discover all that was said in that tête-à-tête walk between Sophy and Lord Stoketon. It is sufficient to say, that Lord Stoketon proposed and was accepted.

And what had become of Sophy's predilection for Captain Herbert? Had she quite forgotten him? It seems she had, for when Charlotte Daventry, after expressing over and over again her delight at dear Sophy's prospects, suddenly looked a little sad, and said with a sigh, "poor Captain Herbert," Sophy neither blushed nor sighed. Charlotte withdrew her eyes, as she saw the smile brightening on

Sophy's face at the distant sound of Lord Stoke-ton's voice—saw her little blush of joy as he entered, and perceived Lord Stoketon's animated glance at Sophy as he opened the door. She turned away her head, and in another moment left the room.

“Yes,” said she to herself, as she ascended the stairs, “baffled for once! Such a blundering, good-hearted fool! What other man would have come over post-haste to accuse his mistress to her father, of telling a lie of his friend and ridiculing himself? Well, I have learnt one thing, never to trust again to what a simpleton may not do!”

“My dear Mrs. Grey, I do congratulate you with all my heart,” said Lady Dowton in the kindest, most affectionate manner, as she was shewn into the drawing-room at Weston about a week after Lord Stoketon's proposal.

Mrs. Grey knew that Lady Dowton had

done some mischief by spreading disagreeable reports of Sophy, and she had declared, in the virtuous indignation of the moment, that she had no patience with her, and she did not care if she saw it. However, when Lady Dowton walked into the room and congratulated so kindly, and looked so very much pleased (as every one was indeed) that Sophy was going to be married, Mrs. Grey quite forgot her want of patience—extended her hand with the most cordial, happy smile on her face—begged Lady Dowton to sit on the sofa, for she was sure she must be tired; and overcame her displeasure so much, as to say, “You are very kind,” and to tell her all, from the first hour of acquaintance down to that of his proposing, not forgetting the very doubts whether the wedding should be on a Monday or a Thursday.

Lady Dowton listened as never woman listened before, when the subject related neither

to themselves nor their own concerns; and when she had farther ascertained that Lord Stoketon was gone from Weston to see his mother and sister, and hasten the lawyers; and that Sophy employed for the trousseau the same milliner she had always employed; she took her leave without being much fatigued, or a 'sad invalid,' for more than once during the visit. Mrs. Grey said, "After all, she really is a good, kind creature; so very fond of us all, and particularly of our dear Sophy."

"Mr. George Foley, ma'am," said the servant, and in walked Mr. George Foley. He congratulated Mrs. Grey, as she expected he would, and she smiled so much and so often that there was no doubt whether condolences or congratulations were due. Mrs. Grey then enquired after Miss Foley, and remembered that Anne had some message for her, and Anne was sent for and obliged to come.

“Who could dare to say she was unamiable?” thought George Foley, as Anne entered. He was come on a visit of discovery of character, and who will give much for his assurances that his love should not blind him, when we find that one look was sufficient to make him say to himself, “She is little less than an angel!”

Yes! Mr. Foley, it is an easy thing for any happy deluded lover to say, ‘I will not be blind!’ But when the very thing you love comes before you—when the very voice you love to hear speaks to you—the very eyes you love to look on are turned upon you—then it is not easy to remember such high resolves; and, if George Foley in that morning visit forgot every thing but that Anne Grey was the most perfect being he had ever seen, who will blame him? or dare to say, that with all his good sense, he was unpardonably weak!

“ Yes,” thought he, as he rode home from Weston, “ it would be happiness indeed to win her affection ! ” and he spurred his horse in the eagerness of the thought, and the horse curveted and capered to remind him for a moment he was on horseback ; but he was an excellent horseman, and he soon forgot it again, and once more provoked his horse to caper and plunge, as he thought, “ It may be won ! Time and perseverance may touch the heart of Anne Grey ! ” and he galloped home, for he was very late. Anne Grey had kept him too long !

CHAPTER XII.

“ DID you give the note ?” said Charlotte Daventry to her maid.

“ I did Mam’selle.” Charlotte Daventry smiled.

At length the wedding day arrived. That day which many have looked for, longed for, sighed for, and repented of. All the due quantity of love had been made by Lord Stoketon and Sophy Grey : the due number of lovers’ walks taken, and the due number of delays

gone through, from the dilatoriness and the precision of lawyers; all lawyers had been duly sent (we will not say where, for it does not matter) by Lord Stoketon, and Sophy had made all the proper number of excuses for them. The trousseau had been ordered; and the trousseau arrived; and there were pretty gowns, and pelisses, and bonnets, and canezoons sufficient to make any young lady, from the age of seventeen to five-and-twenty, ardently wish to be married, and most sincerely envy Sophy Grey! There was white—bridal white—nothing so becoming! There was beautiful, rich black velvet! There was pretty, lively pink; soft, sentimental blue: *vapeur*—most becoming of all becoming colours! There were all these, and there were more. Oh! happy bride elect! Why do young ladies ever answer ‘*No?*’

The trousseau had been duly looked at and admired by all the ladies in the house, and the

neighbourhood. Every ladies' maid within a walk had just at that crisis been moved with the spirit of friendship for Mrs. Watson, or Mrs. Hickman, at Weston ; and all had seen the trousseau, and all had admired.

The favours were ready : white and silver : pretty emblems of love, where love is simple, unchanging, and poor. Why are there not golden favours? Surely there should be this distinction made for the prudent, sensible marriages, which are planned on the wisest deliberations of Chaperons — which are formed on considerations of rent-rolls, jointures, houses in town, and houses in the country—which have nothing to do with hearts. Surely, for such as these, this glittering and appropriate distinction might be made. It would be a true emblem of the sensible and praiseworthy principles on which the marriage was planned. Let those who foolishly and rashly marry on love and

esteem, retain the common badge of simple white ; but let not merit go unrewarded. Let golden principles have golden badges. Let them gain all possible advantage from their wisdom. Let their gold be displayed, for its merit is in display. It will not, like affection, make a peaceful home ; it was never meant to give quiet happiness ; it aspires to distinction, and must be blazoned forth. English justice will surely see the propriety of granting a peculiar badge for the weddings of the prudent, who, with praiseworthy zeal, sacrifice every feeling on the shrine of wealth. I am digressing from Sophy Grey, even though the wedding ring had been procured, and Lord Stoketon had declared that never was such a little finger in want of a wedding ring before.

Anne had wept and smiled, with that mixture of feelings which all perhaps have known on such occasions. She was very glad, and

very sorry, and smiles and tears were the consequence: but smiles predominated, for Anne Grey was not selfish: and she had listened to all Sophy had to say and to feel on the occasion: she had praised Lord Stoketon, and he had praised her, and they had both praised Sophy; and with delight she had heard him say how happy he was and ought to be. Charlotte Daven-try had been glad and sorry too. She had said how dear and pretty she thought Sophy! how charming! how much in love Lord Stoketon was! and Lord Stoketon had thought her a dear good, affectionate girl, who was devotedly fond of Sophy.

At length, on a fine Thursday morning the bells of the church at Weston were set merrily ringing—the clergyman was in readiness—the party of friends were dressed in all bridal elegance—the brides-maids, simply and becomingly attired, were ready; and the bride appeared,

lovely, as brides should appear, and the bridegroom, poor man ! happy, awkward, and annoyed in his orthodox blue coat.

The bride turned a little pale, and then a little flushed, and at last, had just the right quantity of bright, becoming colour, and almost shed a tear, but not quite, for a smile came instead and chased it away ; the bridegroom was warned not to forget the ring, and all were assembled round the altar : ‘ I will,’ was uttered in a clear, low voice, and the new name written, and Sophy Grey was Sophy Grey no more ; and she turned her bright face to be looked on, and loved, and admired by the crowd of relations and friends surrounding her ; and they thought that Sophy Stoketon was still dearer and prettier than even Sophy Grey had been—and then the carriages were entered, and the house was reached. Sophy walked into her father’s house—her childhood’s home—her home no longer—and

the bridal dress was changed, and the travelling dress took its place, and all crowded round her—the father, the mother, the sister, the brothers—all crowded round her to say good-bye—to look and look on that dear face once more—to feel that her fate was sealed—to pray that it might be a happy one ; to think that she was going away—away from them—away from her home—away with a stranger ! and tears and smiles were mingled, and fond looks, and long embraces—and a father's mingled tear of joy and sorrow was on her cheek, and the sister's tear, that vainly tried to be a smile, and the mother's sobs ; and Sophy Grey left her father's house—left it with the bright beam of joy and hope upon her brow — and another moment, the carriage door was closed, the last good-bye uttered—and Sophy was gone.

Oh ! how melancholy ! how lonely does the house appear, where but a moment before all

has been interest and hurry. Who has not experienced the deserted sensation, when those whom we have been accustomed to see are gone — when the agitation, the interest of parting is over. The forlorn empty look of the room—the stillness—the work-box, the drawing materials, the music, all gone ; or perhaps one single thing left to remind us how all was—a flower, perhaps, that had been gathered and cast aside—the cover of a letter which had been scribbled over in the forgetfulness of the happy conversation.

Yes ! that was a melancholy, *happy* day for those who remained at Weston. To none, perhaps, so melancholy as to Anne. She had lost more than any. To all but her, Sophy Stoketon would be much the same as Sophy Grey had been, whenever she was again amongst them ; but to Anne it was not so. There is a degree of intimacy and communion

of thought and feeling existing between sisters that cannot remain unbroken after marriage. Pure and beautiful as is the tie of sisterhood, it is not right that it should continue in all its strictness and exclusiveness when marriage has divided them; for the husband has still stronger claims upon his wife, and it is impossible this can exist uninjured if the tie of sisterhood is retained in all its former power.

Anne Grey felt all this as she returned to the deserted room at Weston;—her's and Sophy's joint room, where Sophy had so lately been, and had kissed her, and asked her so often to write, and said that she felt as if Weston would always be her home—as if she should always love that room. Anne returned to it. How melancholy it looked! How different! how changed her whole life would be now. How changed Sophy's would be—perhaps not changed for greater happiness; could it indeed

be changed for greater? No, Anne's long suppressed tears might now be allowed to flow, as she thought with fond regret of the days gone by—the happy childish days with Sophy ever near her — Sophy's ready laugh — her joyous voice—Anne Grey wept, nor could she compose herself till a gentle knock at the door announced the entrance of Charlotte Daventry, and recalled her to the necessity of self-controul.

The sight of Charlotte checked her tears, she scarce knew why ; but she had been dwelling fondly upon days of happy childhood, of opening womanhood with Sophy, and she was at once re-called from her pleasing yet mournful vision by the sight of Charlotte.

“ Dear Anne,” said Charlotte, “ I thought how it would be. But you must not cry. Yet I know it is difficult to prevent it. Even I—I, who have so much less cause, am almost as foolish. But then you should think of Sophy's

happiness—we all should. We should try to follow her example ; she behaved so well ! You see *she* did not cry—not even when she wished us all good-bye.”

Anne dried her tears. “ No,” said she sadly, “ I ought not to cry ; but we will go down, Charlotte. We must be in good spirits this evening, and all our party will wonder if we are not—so let us go down.”

“ Never was a prettier bridesmaid to a prettier bride,” said Charlotte, smiling at Anne, as they descended the stairs arm and arm. So thought George Foley, who was at the wedding. So thought Robert Dodson, who was also there.

Poor Robert Dodson ! How did he bear the loss of his cousin Sophy ?—Remarkably well, and Mrs. Dodson only looked grave and cross for one minute, when she heard that Sophy was going to marry Lord Stoketon.

“ Anne will do just as well, and better indeed,” said she to herself, “ and I have always thought that Bob rather preferred her: ‘ My wife’s sister, ‘ Lady Stoketon!’ ‘ Viscountess Stoketon!’ sounds very well. Yes. I really am heartily glad!” and Mrs. Dodson went over to Weston to tell Mrs. Grey how heartily glad she was; to give Mr. Grey a hearty shake of the hand; and wish Anne, with all her heart, as good a husband in a little time.

Mrs. Dodson told Bob, when she went home, that she thought Anne Grey grew prettier every time she saw her, and Bob looked so happy, and coloured so deeply, as she said so, that Mrs. Dodson was quite satisfied, and thought the Greys were really excellent people—as nice a family as she knew any where—and as highly thought of in the world—Mrs. Dodson’s world of fashion!

“ Yes! I have failed!” said Charlotte to

herself that night as she retired to bed. "Yet, how could it be otherwise? no eyes, no ears, no attention for any other being. Fond, devoted simpleton! it was impossible. But still"—she paused an instant—"still, father, do not blame me yet. Do not say that I am guilty—that I am careless! Is there not married felicity? Yes, father, you know it: there is married felicity! A vain, conceited coxcomb still lives, and a vain conceited girl still lives, not the less that she is married. Yes! there is married felicity, heavenly boon! Father, wait awhile, for there is married bliss!" Charlotte Daventry smiled.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANNE was no longer the one of two Miss Greys; she wrote Miss Grey on her mother's cards, and sighed as she did so; and when Henry, who came home on the happy occasion, and had declared he thought a wedding a monstrous dull thing,—not half the fun he had expected—said “ Well, Anne ! so you are Miss Grey now ! Only think of that—Miss Grey ! ” as if he imagined the height of power and felicity lay in those words ; she only gave a

sigh, and looked towards the empty table where Sophy's drawing book was wont to lie.

For the first few days and weeks, time passed heavily with her. She tried to say 'how selfish!' 'how wrong it was to regret her loss so much.' But how very easy it is to say how selfish we are, and to feel quite sure we will be so no more! and yet how very easy it is to go on being quite as selfish as ever. When we are crying and sighing over the absence of a friend who has gone away to be ten times as happy as if they were enjoying our society, it is so easy to say that 'we ought to be glad'; that 'we are very wrong not to rejoice:' yet still, as with other things that are the easiest in the world to say, it is the most difficult to practice.

There stands the empty chair; there stands the round table *minus* the figure of our pleasant companion; there is the long gravel walk

which we pace up and down, without our friend to pace up and down with us, and beguile the tedium of wholesome exercise. Still worse does it seem if our friend has been a *useful* friend—a sort of domestic toady! there lies our book on the table at the other end of the room! we would give all we possess to have it in our hands; but where is the useful friend to give it us? There is our work! we would give a good deal to go on with it, having no other employment; but we got into a scrape in the morning: two immense knots, hard, involved, tight, and firm, as Gordian knots, must be unpicked before we can go on; and where is the useful friend to unpick them? We sigh bitterly—perhaps we groan in the anguish of our hearts; we know that our good, dear, useful friend and toady is exceedingly happy all this time—much happier than ever she dreamt of being when with us. How easy

it is to say in such a case, "that we ought to be very glad!" Yet who can help regretting? who ever thought of not being selfish? who would not resolve, even at that very moment, never, if possible, to let our useful friend leave us again?

Anne Grey said how wrong it was to regret Sophy's loss; but still she could not help regretting; and when Sophy, in about a month after her marriage, returned to Weston for a week, she found that week the shortest that ever was spent. Oh! it was delightful to see dear Sophy so happy! to have her once more amongst them: she almost felt that she never had loved her so much before. Anne felt the quick and easy flight of time. To the happy indeed, it flies swifter than the swallow; but not so to the listless ennuyé: time to the ennuyé is like the high and insurmountable wall up which the snail lingers and dawdles in

his toilsome progress ; and should he get to the top ! what then ! why he must toil down again ; and away he goes, creeping, slipping, sliding, slowly as ever ; till some mischance befalls him !—he looses his hold—and down he falls, to the river that flows dark, cold, and deep below. Snail and ennuyé !—they both get their falls—the one in the water—the other in the grave. In vain they turn with regret, the one to his wall,—the other to his time, despised, mis-spent and lost !

Anne Grey had experienced the quick and the slow progress of time. When Sophy was absent it had passed heavily ; but Sophy was come, and never did a week fly so rapidly. She and her husband departed, and Anne was left again to muse on time past and present, and to feel more lonely than ever, after the short, happy week spent in their society.

A little vexation occurred to vary the

monotony of existence, and if, as a wise man avers, "the greatest pleasure in life consists in being beloved," how supremely happy might she have been.

One morning, Mr. Robert Dodson walked into the drawing-room at Weston: Mrs. Grey not being there, he proceeded to his cousin's morning-room; the comfortable busy looking room where Anne and Sophy sat in the morning, working, drawing, playing, or reading;—where stood Anne's harp—where stood the small piano-forte, Mr. Grey's present to them one happy new-year's-day (when the rents had paid well), for their own private room and morning practice: and there stood the table, covered with pretty and useful things—there stood the drawing-table with the half finished drawing, and the open port-folio leaning against the light chair by its side: there stood, on another table, the flower rising

from the moss in a pyramid of rosy blossoms; and on the ground was set the basket filled with gaudy coloured worsteds: there, drawn to the fire, stood the comfortable arm chair, and still more the comfortable one with long back and no arms; there the small, neat book-case, filled with books both useful and ornamental: against the walls hung the framed drawings; the chef-d'œuvres of Anne and Sophy. There too hung the likenesses of all the family of Greys in small gold frames, which half concealed the miniatures they were meant to adorn. There from that comfortable busy room the sun was visible, gaily streaming over the smooth short grass, the bright clumps of flowers, the sloping lawn, the graceful trees, the verdant shrubs, the distant hills, and the river which roamed through the farther valley.

It was into this happy looking room that Mr. Dodson was ushered. He was infected with the matrimonial contagion. He saw Sophy

Grey turned into a happy wife. He saw Lord Stoketon looking happier than any one ever looked before; and if Robert Dodson was not a sensible man, he at least felt and behaved like one at present, for he thought such happiness was not to be despised. As he entered, he found not his cousin Anne, but Charlotte Daventry.

“ I thought Anne had been here,” said he after greeting her.

“ No,” said Charlotte; “ here am I in solitary blessedness! but Anne is only gone to look for a book, and she will be here again in a moment. Yes!” said she, smiling archly at him, “ and perhaps she would come directly, even without her book, if she knew who was here. Poor Anne!” and Charlotte smiled again, and looked significant. Robert Dodson smiled, coloured, sat down—got up again, and said, “ Do you think she would? I don’t know—I wish I knew—” And again he seated himself.

“ ‘ Faint heart never won fair lady,’ ” said Charlotte Daventry, in a quiet, half laughing, little voice. “ But, I will go and look for her.”

“ Miss Daventry ! ” said he, getting up and trying to call her back — “ Miss Daventry ! ” but Charlotte was gone--and in a few minutes Anne and Charlotte entered. Anne had no book in her hand ; she looked pleased, and said she was glad to see her cousin, and then sat down to her drawing. In a few minutes Charlotte said she must search for a letter she had to answer, and giving a little comic look at Mr. Robert Dodson, left the room.

In a few minutes more, Mr. Robert Dodson was just peering over Anne’s drawing—then he seated himself in a chair close to her’s, and said he wished he had one of her drawings—was very readily promised one when it was finished—“ This very one, if he liked.” He

should like that—anything of hers ; and turned away his head—coloured—got up—went and looked out of the window—came and sat down again, and said, “How pretty Sophy looked when she was married !”

Considering that Sophy had been married more than two months, and that he had seen Anne several times since, that was rather a stale remark. Anne smiled a little, said she certainly did look very pretty, and very composedly went on with her drawing ; but as nothing followed the remark, she looked up at Mr. Robert Dodson in some little surprise, and still more was she surprised to see him looking confused, and at length, saying, “Yes, she looked very pretty, and very happy, *I* thought.”

“Yes,” said Anne, suspecting her good cousin Bob must have lost his intellects. “Yes, that she certainly was.”

“And, I dare say, she *will* be very happy,”

said he, again looking wistfully at Anne's drawing, or at the little white hand employed upon it. "I dare say people are very happy when they marry," said he, raising his eyes to her face, and as quickly withdrawing them again, as Anne turned to see what he could be meaning.

"Yes," said Anne, "some people, I should hope, are very happy when they marry; and Sophy, I trust," added she laughing, "will be one of these happy ones. I should think that she and Lord Stoketon had an excellent chance."

"Lord Stoketon is a happy man!" said Robert Dodson, not looking at Anne, and heaving a deep sigh. "What," thought Anne, beginning at last to fancy she understood him: "is cousin Bob going to be sentimental! Is he actually wearing the willow for Sophy?" There was something so nearly ludicrous in the idea of Bob Dodson's being sentimental, that Anne

found it difficult not to laugh,—this difficulty made her blush. “Can it be,” thought she, “that he was in love with her? But I ought not to laugh—for I pity him if it was so. Still I hope he is not going to make me his confidante;” and she continued her drawing, feeling a little embarrassed; and tried to turn the conversation away from Sophy, and Lord Stoke-ton, and the willowed heart.

But he was bent on proceeding. He looked up and saw her blush—it gave him courage. “Lord Stoke-ton is a happy man!” and he sighed again. “I envied him at the wedding. I thought the bride very pretty—very lovely indeed!” added he with a sigh, “and so they all said; but do you know,” and he looked on the ground for a minute, “do you know, Anne, what I thought?”

Anne’s face grew still hotter: she thought it was really coming, and she should have to

listen to a confession of love for a married woman from Robert Dodson.

“Do you know,” said he, looking up at her with a very tender expression, “*I* thought somebody else much prettier !”

“Did you !” said Anne, raising her head, pleased to find herself out of the expected scrape.

“Did you ?” said she, looking at him and half laughing ; but quite astonished when she saw his look of confusion—his delight as she turned towards him.

“Why, what can it be !” thought she. “Oh ! perhaps another confidence : perhaps,” and she wondered she never had thought of it before, “perhaps he is in love with Charlotte.” She had not long to wait.

“*I* thought some one much prettier—much prettier than every body else, indeed ; and I always do, at all times. Yes, I see you understand what I mean. I thought you were ten

times prettier than Sophy, and I wished that you were going to be married too," he continued with encreasing courage, and not to be mistaken empressement of manner and look, as Anne turned away and blushed deeply in utter dismay and vexation as that '*you*' revealed the secret. She was vexed, thoroughly mortified, and deceived.

"Yes," said he looking at her, "I envied Lord Stoketon. I wished that I was in his place then, and you in Sophy's. I never dare tell you before—I never dare ask you," continued he, growing more energetic every minute, as Anne's continued silence and blushes seemed to assure him of her approbation. "But you must have seen it long ago. You were so kind! but I never should have spoken had not ——"

Anne stopped him. She had at first been too much surprised and confused to think what to say. But she now recollected herself, and

quietly and calmly she begged him not to proceed. She said, she feared she could not misunderstand him : that she wished it had not been so. Robert Dodson put in a word about his love—his ardent love—his hope she would return it.

“No, no,” said Anne, “do not say any more, cousin Robert. It is all a mistake. Indeed you are mistaken in thinking what you do. Let me hope you do not mean all you are saying. You love me, I hope, as a cousin—as I have always loved you ; let us go on loving one another in this way.”

She put out her hand to him. He hesitated for a moment ; but then his better nature prevailed. He took her hand.

“Yes,” said she gently, and with a kind, yet firm voice, “let us go on loving one another as cousins. I shall try to forget what you have said to-day, and you will forget it too—you

will soon forget that you ever thought of me but as a cousin."

"No, no," said Robert Dodson, dropping her hand. "I shall never forget!" and he leant his head on the table. "I am very wretched," said he looking up. "I have been a fool! but you have made me very miserable! —No! I never shall forget to love you. I always shall! I always have!"

Anne was very sorry—very much perplexed to know what to do, or say; and just then, when she despaired of making Mr. Robert Dodson less miserable, without giving him false hopes, the door opened and Mrs. Grey walked in.

"Robert!" said she. "I did not know you were here. I'm very glad to see you." But poor Robert Dodson was not in a state to speak, much less to be glad of anything at that moment.

Mrs. Grey perceived it. "Why, Anne, is

anything the matter?" said she, looking at her inquisitively. Anne blushed; just muttered in reply, "I do'nt know;" and walked out of the room. Mrs. Grey began to guess: she put one or two apposite questions, and she soon obtained the truth from Robert.

Mrs. Grey was a kind-hearted woman. She could not bear to see Robert Dodson unhappy, and she tried to comfort him. She said he must not despair: it was only a little nonsense of Anne's: he must wait a little, and try again;—he must wait till she was a little older, in other words wiser, and knew her own mind better: and poor Robert at last went home a much less miserable man than he expected. He still hoped that his cousin Anne would learn to like him, and that it would end happily by her becoming Mrs. Robert Dodson.

Mrs. Grey and hope had whispered kind words to him, and, if they were delusive, still they were pleasant ! Let us all hope and believe as Robert Dodson did. Disappointment is scarcely so bitter as hopelessness ; and if our wishes should not be fulfilled, after all have we not gained ? We only come at last to the melancholy truth which we might have known long before. We have been enjoying days, or years of happiness to which we had no right. But are they less charming on that account ? Oh no ! Let us then when ‘ Hope tells a flattering tale,’ believe its enchanting whispers. Let us, with Robert Dodson, contentedly submit to something disagreeable, because we hope for something very agreeable ; and let us envy him as he rode home that day from Weston : a rejected yet a hopeful lover.

When Robert Dodson was gone, Anne was severely lectured by Mrs. Grey, as if it had

been her, and not Robert Dodson who had just done a foolish thing: she was asked “Why she had been so unkind to poor Robert? Why she did not wish to marry him?”

Anne said how sorry she was that she could not like him sufficiently; but that so it was. Mrs. Grey begged her not to be foolish, and always throw away her chances of happiness in this way—begged she would be kind in her manner to poor Robert, and let him perceive no difference: he had promised she said, very good-naturedly, that it should make no difference in his feelings. If no such person as Mr. George Foley had existed, Mrs. Grey might have been still more severe upon her; but Robert Dodson was certainly less desirable for a son-in-law than George Foley; and Mrs. Grey was therefore less displeased than might have been expected, considering the serious nature of her daughter's offence.

Poor Anne was much annoyed by what had passed. She was sorry on Robert Dodson's account: she had always liked him as a good-hearted youth, whose stupidity she could easily overlook for the sake of his kind disposition; and it was disagreeable to her to cause him pain, or to view him in any other light than as their affectionate cousin.

But she was still more mortified by her mother's manner. She saw with surprise that Mrs. Grey blamed her for not accepting him, and that even now she had scarcely given up the idea that she certainly ought to marry him, and that in course of time she probably would. She was annoyed at it; but Anne was never meant for a heroine; and instead therefore of fretting herself and the family into a fever by fine bursts of sentiment, indignation, and ill-humour, she went on contentedly and cheerfully, although she had refused a wealthy lover

—although she feared his proposing a second time—and although she dreaded that her mother, and perhaps both her parents, would be very angry if she did not accept him.

CHAPTER XIV.

PERHAPS it will be supposed that Anne Grey was alike insensible to pleasure and to pain. That she was one of those excellent stupid people, who really are so very good, that we find it the hardest thing in the world to love them : whom, in fact, we never do love with our heart, only with our reason : whom we even find it the hardest thing not to dislike, if they are much thrown in our way. Could we but discover some little weakness — some one little

point which could make either their eyes sparkle, their cheeks redden, or their tongues utter an involuntary exclamation—we could then forgive them all the rest—we should be saved at once from dislike, and, perhaps, might even begin to love them.

Anne Grey never put any one to this test. Though she could cheerfully submit to unavoidable evils, she was perfectly alive to the sensation of pleasure—was quite capable of uttering hasty exclamations of delight—of having her heart beat with joy, and her eyes sparkle with happiness. She really had emotions, in proof of which, she was actually in a flutter of pleasure one morning on the arrival of a letter to Mr. Grey.

This animating letter was merely from Mr. Temple, and its contents nothing more than a proposal to come to Weston, if convenient to Mr. and Mrs. Grey.

Nothing could be so convenient as Mr. Temple's coming. Mrs. Grey had been longing to have the house filled with company ;—there really were so many people they ought to ask ; it was quite shameful they had not been asked long ago ! She only wanted an excuse to make this evident to Mr. Grey, for she was not quite certain that it would be so clear to him ; but now Mr. Temple had invited himself. He could not come to a family party. Some one must meet him, and she easily gained Mr. Grey's consent to invite as many of their acquaintance as the house would hold.

Will it be believed that Edward Temple, who could condescend to talk so much and so agreeably to little simple Anne Grey, was really a great personage ? The world of fashion would hardly have denied his claim to that distinction. Napoleon had been a greater man, certainly—Walter Scott had, perhaps, been a

greater man—Beau Brummel, no doubt, in his day had been by some considered a greater man—but still Edward Temple was a great man, and Mrs. Grey was so delighted that the all-admired Mr. Temple should have proposed to come to Weston that she ordered the carriage, and drove over to see her dear cousin, Mrs. Dodson.

Perhaps she mentioned his name in that visit! Be that as it may, Mrs. Dodson and she talked a good deal about Robert Dodson and Anne. They said it was a foolish affair. Mrs. Grey apologized for Anne—said she was young and did not know her own mind, but no doubt in a little time would be wiser; she was rather more discreet than she otherwise might have been as she thought of Mr. George Foley, and of Edward Temple's visit; but still she ventured to say, that she hoped poor dear Robert

would not take it much to heart, and would not despair.

Mrs. Dodson said, that poor dear Robert certainly did rather take it to heart, but she thought he would soon get up a better spirit, and she had no doubt it would all be well, and Anne would know her own interest better in a little time; and Mrs. Dodson's forbearance and friendliness on the subject did her great credit.

Mr. Temple came to Weston. A party was invited on the occasion. The Foleys unluckily were gone from home for a fortnight. It was very unfortunate! Poor Mrs. Grey had relied upon them. She was, to tell the truth, with all her delight, a little nervous about Mr. Temple's visit. She was afraid of not having lords and ladies, and fashionable people enough to meet him. I am sure any good kind of country gentleman's wife will sympathise with her at this moment. They all may have felt the

strange mixture of pleasure and pain combating in their minds when some great man or woman of society—some one a little superior to themselves, has deigned to offer himself as their guest. What good kind of woman has not felt in a *fidget*, and wished that the honour and the pleasure were more synonymous?

Just so felt Mrs. Grey! It was a great honour to have Mr. Temple, but still, what were her exclamations and remarks beginning with ‘I wish,’ which means ‘I have something to fear’—what were her remarks to Mr. Grey on the subject? “Oh! Mr. Grey! how I wish we had got a party to meet Mr. Temple! I wish, my dear, we had got those new chairs in the drawing-room! I wish, my dear, I knew whether Mr. Temple ever eats veal, because Fowler says there is nothing to be had for the top dish the first day but veal! I wish, Mr. Grey, we had a man cook! I wish we could

know whom he would like to meet! I wish, my dear, those lamps would burn better in the dining-room. The last time we had company they gave no light at all! a pair of tallow candles would have given as much!" And many, many more, were Mrs. Grey's wishes, hopes, and fears, on the subject. Mr. Grey listened to them with a patient, enduring face, and whether he attended to them or not is a matter of no importance.

"I wish to goodness that the Foleys had come," added Mrs. Grey. She had thought of the Foleys directly, as suitable people to meet him, and it was so unlucky that they were gone out. "Really gone! Are you quite sure, Mr. Grey, that he says not to be back before Wednesday?—Yes, I see," said she, with a heavy sigh, as she looked over Mr. Foley's note, and saw that there was no possibility of reading it with a different meaning.

“Well, we can have Lady Dowton, and Sir John, if he is at home. Mr. Temple knows Lady Dowton, and I saw he talked to her a little at Chatterton.”

“My dear, what does it signify,” said Mr. Grey, “whom we have? Mr. Temple is coming to see us—not to see people he can meet every day of his life if he chooses. Ask those whom it is our turn to ask. You told me there were several people we ought to invite, so now is your time. As we are going to have the bore of company let us get off all the civilities at once.”

“Well, my dear, Mr. Grey, I am sure, I am very anxious to do so. I did not think you would have been so cross about it.”

Mr. Grey’s placid smile showed how *very* cross he was liable to be.

“I wish to get a pleasant party to meet Mr. Temple, if I can,” continued she. “He is used to such smart people.”

“ I am afraid you will not find many in this neighbourhood,” said Mr. Grey smiling. “ But settle it yourself. I leave it to you, my dear. I shall be quite satisfied, and so will Mr. Temple, I dare say, with whoever you choose to ask.”

Poor Mrs. Grey did settle it as well as she could. The day arrived, and Anne wondered why she felt so particularly shy at the thought of a party at home; she told herself it must be because Sophy was not there to be ‘ Miss Grey.’ Mr. Temple came, and she blushed so deeply when he arrived, that, as she ascended the stairs to her own room, she said to herself, “ How foolish! how provoking! What might he not have thought of it?” She remembered what Charlotte had said concerning his preference for her, and her coldness of manner to him. She wished that Charlotte had never uttered a word on the subject, for she felt so

awkward. She was sure he did not care for her, and if that were the case, he could not care how cold her manner was.

Whilst these thoughts were passing in her mind, her toilet was completed, and she descended to the drawing-room with the persuasion that nothing was so awful as walking into a room before dinner.

As she entered, she saw Mr. Temple talking to her cousin. Charlotte looked better than Anne had ever seen her before. It was strange, but even her manner seemed improved—her complexion brightened—her eyes more beautiful.—Then her dress was perfect, and her figure, which was always good, but not always shewn to the best advantage, from her negligence of dress, was now displayed to the greatest advantage. Anne was quite struck with her appearance, and she could scarcely keep her eyes from her. Perhaps it was because she had no

longer Sophy to compare her with, but Charlotte certainly looked decidedly handsome. Her manner likewise, quiet, and lady-like, yet filled with animation and grace, as she sat smiling, talking, or listening to Mr. Temple.

Anne saw that he was struck with her. He never moved when she entered ; he seemed perfectly engrossed, and went on conversing with evident interest and animation. Anne felt for a moment a little pang—a strange sensation—but it was soon subdued, and she turned away her eyes, and devoted herself to Mrs. Cunningham, who, with Mr. Cunningham, and two out of the three ‘very different,’ or as some one said, ‘very *indifferent*’ Miss Cunninghams, were staying in the house. It was unlucky that Anne asked Miss Cunningham after herself, and talked to Miss Mary Cunningham about her younger sisters : it was a strange mistake, as they were so ‘very different.’

Dinner over, the ladies quitted the dining-room, and in about half an hour after, the approach of the gentlemen was heard.

Anne wondered whether Mr. Temple would come and talk to her, or whether he would again devote himself to Charlotte. She tried, as the door opened at the other end of the room, to talk to Miss Mary Cunningham, and not to care whether Mr. Temple spoke to her or not. She sat with her back to the door, so that she could see no one as they entered, and there was a long room to be crossed before the procession of gentlemen could reach her, if any were even so inclined. Charlotte Daventry sat behind her, more in the middle of the room. Anne tried not to listen for Mr. Temple's voice, and to talk very steadily to Miss Mary Cunningham. She was kept some time in suspense. She heard some one ask Charlotte what her work was, and wonder how ladies could work ! That was

not Mr. Temple. Then she heard the beginnings of various talkings. Heard an arm-chair wheeled a little nearer to the fire, or to the table, or to some one's seat. "That is Mr. Temple," thought she; and she asked Miss Mary Cunningham, for the second time that evening, whether she had ridden much lately.

Yes—Anne gave it up! He would not talk to her it seemed. That had evidently been his arm-chair, perhaps drawn comfortably towards the fire, with the intention of remaining there for the evening, in a silent mood—a practise, she had heard, was not very uncommon with him when not well pleased with the company. She began to think how foolish she had been to believe a word that Charlotte had said; when Miss Mary Cunningham, whose head was turned towards the door, began to bridle up. Anne read in that movement that some one was coming. Yes, a chair was drawn near her own.

“You have forgotten your promise, Miss Grey,” was said in a voice she did not mistake. She turned her head. It was Mr. Temple. “You have forgotten your promise, Miss Grey.”

“What promise?” said Anne, bending over her work.

“I had hoped,” said he, “you would not have required to be reminded of it. No,” he continued, “I cannot tell you. I have no right to remind you. I only can see and *feel*,” he added, lowering his voice, “that you have forgotten it.”

The colour rushed to Anne’s face as he said this. She remembered the promise, at least, she remembered his asking her to promise never to meet him again as if he were a mere acquaintance—to meet him in future as a friend. In a moment she forgot Charlotte Daventry!

He went on; but, who would suppose that

he would not go on—that he would do otherwise than draw his chair towards her with the intention of conversing?

I am not going to repeat a word more of his conversation, though it lasted some time. Charlotte Daventry looked at them once or twice during its continuance. Once there was a peculiar expression on her countenance as she looked. Could that be a frown from dear good Charlotte Daventry? Oh, no! it could not have been; for when Anne moved from her seat to sing, and Mr. Temple, after sitting some time listening to Anne's singing, seated himself by her side, she shewed how difficult it would be for her to frown. She sat in smiling, quiet gracefulness, as she spoke and listened. There was a gentleness, mingled with animation, about her manner that had never before been discernible. Anne's thoughts were not intent on her as they had been at first that

evening, and, when at length her attention was attracted, she only felt pleasure at seeing her cousin, apparently liked by one whose judgment she valued.

CHAPTER XV.

“GRATITUDE is an overpowering feeling,” said Charlotte Daventry, in continuation of a conversation with Mr. Temple, during one of the Miss Cunningham’s performance on the piano-forte. “Gratitude is an overpowering feeling. It must either exist intensely, or not at all. It must engross all other feelings or it cannot exist.”

“Do you think then,” said he, “that gratitude would render us blind to the faults of those towards whom it is due?”

Charlotte hesitated — at length she said, with some emotion, “ We must wish it should ; yes, I should say it ought to do so. Are we not guilty of a *crime* ?” she said, eagerly looking at him, as if anxious, *very* anxious for his opinion. “ Are we not guilty of a *crime* even, if we do not blind ourselves to the faults of those who have a claim on our gratitude ?”

“ I cannot think so,” said he, regarding her calmly, perhaps with scrutiny.

“ You think not,” said she, eagerly, as she actually bent forward to listen for his answer. “ You think not !” Her eyes expressed pleasure, but that expression soon faded.

“ No ! but it cannot be so. You have never considered the subject seriously, anxiously. You never have had occasion to consider it — as—” she checked herself — “ as some may have had,” she added, “ I was mistaken in thinking” — she stopped herself again. “ Yes,” said she,

“I know it is right to feel gratitude so strongly as to preclude the exercise of every other feeling. It is a crime”—and she put her hand before her eyes, as she uttered this word, and a slight shudder was just perceptible. “It is a crime not to be blind to every failing in those who have a right to expect our gratitude.” She paused for a moment, as if occupied with painful emotions, and then continued, “Oh! it is easy for those who have never lain under a sense of obligation to speak lightly of it—to say it is not a duty! But it is an overpowering duty. Easy, perhaps, to those who begin by love—who can esteem—admire—who are loved—who are not reminded”—she stopped and then said in a lighter tone, “It must, I should think, be easy in such cases to be grateful. It cannot be such an overpowering feeling as I should suppose it to be in others,” she added, laying a stress on the word ‘sup-

pose,' and just glancing at Mr. Temple, as if she were anxious he should perceive she only spoke of an imaginary case—"and yet," continued she, as she saw his face betokened no signs of applying what she had said, as she feared it might be applied, "and yet the duty is as great in one case as in the other. The faults, numerous though they may be, should not be discovered—even though the favour was bestowed grudgingly, unwillingly—though it is continued from necessity alone—still the obligation for gratitude is the same. What a sin it is! how terribly self-upbraiding must that person's feelings be who could not blind herself to the faults and failings of those who bestow the favour!"

She stopped—emotion betrayed itself as she finished, and for a while she seemed completely occupied and abstracted by the thoughts she had conjured up. She put her hand before her

eyes—then slightly starting, as if recollecting herself, she looked up, tried to laugh, said something about the way in which a subject carried her on, saw Edward Temple look at her rather inquisitively, and blushed deeply.

“ You will think,” said she, trying to be gay, “ that I have some person in my head—but you know, it is easy to conjure up imaginary cases. It is very easy! I am, I believe given to do so. I often conjure up cases, and on this very subject—it was odd that we should have been speaking on this subject.”

“ Perhaps not,” said Edward Temple, “ as you say it is one you often think of, and you began it yourself.” Charlotte coloured still more violently, and turned away her head, as she saw him look at her with an intelligent smile on his face.

Perhaps she was hurt by his manner. She might have thought him wanting in consider-

ation for her evident confusion ; for, heedless of her embarrassment, he continued for a few minutes regarding her attentively ; and he added, as he withdrew his gaze, “ Yes, I think it was a subject you yourself began. It is one indeed that I have little reason to think or talk about,” said he carelessly, “ for I have no one to be grateful to, thank goodness!—Except,” he added, turning with an air of gallantry towards her, “ it is to Miss Daventry at this moment for allowing me the pleasure of talking to her.”

“ That is a pleasure,” said Charlotte Daventry, without the slightest coquetry of manner, “ that is a pleasure which it seems I have bestowed so willingly that it lays claim to no gratitude. So Mr. Temple,” said she, smiling, “ according to your own confession, you are relieved from the necessity of gratitude to any one.”

“ And you would regard that, Miss Daven-try, as a happy exemption ?” said he, smiling and looking inquisitively at her.

A flush passed across Charlotte’s face, as he spoke and looked at her with a kind of privileged scrutinizing ease. Her answer was made quietly, and, though free from anger, was such as seemed to rebuke the freedom, if not heartlessness of the question. “ Few people,” said she, lowering her voice, and averting her eyes as she spoke, “ few people would have asked such a question of me.”

Edward Temple felt it—he was struck for an instant with the consciousness of having been unjust. He was grieved, to have asked the poor dependent orphan whether she thought the exemption from gratitude a happiness! It was indeed cruel, if undeserved; and, deserved or not, he saw that it was felt. It had been rebuked, calmly, pointedly, and

with dignity—some proof that it had not been deserved.

Edward Temple was staggered in his pre-conceived opinion, and his voice and manner shewed his consciousness that he had been unkind : when next he spoke, it was with something almost of kindness in his voice. Charlotte Daventry looked up, and at that moment, if not before, Edward Temple must have felt his injustice, for he saw the tear standing in her eye, as she thanked him by her look for the change of his manner.

But the wound had been given—the feelings had been hurt. And in vain did Mr. Temple exert his powers of conversation. In vain did he try, by his lively endeavours to amuse, to dispel the recollection of his unkindness. She was apparently making an effort to seem attentive, and to conceal the depression of spirits which those few words of his had

caused, but evidently unable to overcome the painful recollections they had recalled. She remained serious and almost silent. Edward Temple saw that she wished to be left—that she wished at least that he should not continue to talk to her; and he left her, with a strong feeling of self-upbraiding, which was not a little increased by perceiving shortly after that she had quitted the room.

“How unaccountable!” thought he, “and yet even now may it not all be deceit? A mere finished piece of acting! No,” thought he, as he looked at Anne Grey’s calm and lovely countenance, as she sat listening to Miss Cunningham’s bad playing, without one gesture of impatience, or one look of ridicule to account for her patient attention, “there cannot be falsehood there. Truth and kindness are too plainly written! I have been duped,” he continued, after a minute’s thought, whilst intently

studying the countenance of Anne; "I have been completely duped! after all my caution!" He half smiled. "Duped by a finished piece of acting!" and the next moment he was by the side of Anne Grey.

"Your cousin has left us," said he; "Miss Daventry has disappeared."

"Disappeared!" said Anne, looking round.

"Yes," replied he, "I heard her say 'Good-night.' She was tired, or not well, or something, I believe." Anne's face of concern was just what Edward Temple expected, and, be it known, what he wished to see.

"I hope she is not ill," said Anne; and she left the piano-forte, the Miss Cunninghams—and Mr. Temple—looked the fear she felt, that Charlotte Daventry was ill, and left the room.

"I knew it!" thought Edward Temple, and he seated himself with his back to Miss

Cunningham, not the least aware that she was in the finale of her first-rate song.

“ I knew how it would be ! There was proof in that kind, pitying look ; and I have done well, if she has any feeling—any touch of remorse ; I have sent the best tormentor to her.”

“ Mr. Temple,” said Mrs. Grey, “ I beg your pardon—but I think Miss Cunningham is looking for the book you have there.”

Mr. Temple started at the sound of Mrs. Grey’s civil apologetic voice. He got up and gave the book to Miss Cunningham, and then remembered to turn his face towards the instrument and the performer.

Anne returned in about a quarter of an hour. He looked at her as she entered. She was grave, and there was something of sorrow and of pity in her look.

“ I hope Miss Daventry is not ill ?” said he, as she returned to the music party.

“No, she is not ill, thank you,” said Anne, “but she was a little overcome. Charlotte, though she appears so lively and thoughtless,” said she after a few minutes’ pause, “has a great deal of feeling. Unhappily, perhaps for her! Little things affect her at times—one scarcely knows why—except, indeed,” added she, “that it is easy to believe under such a melancholy situation as her’s how readily every little thing may affect her.”

“I who am so happy,” she continued, half smiling through the sadder expression which rested on her countenance, “have so little reason to understand her feelings that I am often fearful of wounding them from ignorance or inadvertence—not that I cannot sympathize with her, for my own happiness makes me more alive to the sense of what it must be to be deprived of it. It appeared, from what she let fall, that something had occurred to agitate

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her this evening. — Poor thing!" said she, with a compassionate voice: "she is indeed to be pitied! No affection, no care, no kindness can supply the place of that she is deprived of!"

"I believe you did not know her father?" said Edward Temple.

"I see you think," said Anne, looking at him as he spoke, "that my cousin is not to be pitied for the loss of such a father. But he was devotedly fond of her, and she was probably blind to his faults. She had no occasion to know them; for they were not faults against her. She, I know, was attached to him with no common devotion. She had only him to love, for she lost her mother when almost an infant. A child is indeed to be pitied who has no parent!" She sighed, and was silent for a moment. Edward Temple read with delight in her expressive countenance the feelings

which had made her pause, and of which he had just before been almost deceived into believing her incapable.

Miss Cunningham's performance was at an end ; and Anne was to say something civil, to ask for another song, and to be refused with becoming diffidence ; and thus closed the scene.

And now what shall we say, when we hear that Anne actually remained awake that night, to ask herself, what we all know by this time, ' whether she was in love with Mr. Temple ? ' ' Whether, if she were in love with him, it was wrong in her to be so ? ' and lastly, ' whether, after all, Edward Temple was a marrying man ? ' If Edward Temple had been asked that question what would he have answered ? " Let me wait," he would perhaps have said, " till I am safe away from Weston, and then I will tell you."

CHAPTER XVI.

CHARLOTTE Daventry's manner, the next morning, shewed no traces of the agitation which Anne had witnessed with sorrow on the preceding evening. When she had then gone up to her room, she had found her in evident emotion, and as Anne kindly questioned her as to the cause, she let fall some allusions to her desolate situation in the loss of her father, which revealed at once what had affected her.

Anne had often witnessed such emotion

before, caused, as she believed, by some slight allusion to her situation, something which had touched on the chord of feeling—unconsciously perhaps to all but herself.

Charlotte kissed her cousin, and the tears, which had probably been suppressed before, began to flow as she leant on her neck, and thanked her over and over again for her kindness; and then, with considerate eagerness, begged her not to remain with her.

“Do not I know,” said she, “that *he* is here,” smiling through her tears. “Yes, yes, Anne, you must go, and leave me:” and as she was beginning to refuse, “yes, you *must* go. I had rather be left—indeed I had—it is better for me;” and she urged her so much to return to the drawing-room, that Anne saw it was better to comply.

If Anne had been a real heroine she would have been delighted to have her duty and her

pleasure so little at variance. She would, as she entered the drawing-room, and saw the hero's eyes still fondly resting on the door, the very door where last he had caught a glimpse of her receding figure;—she would, as she saw those eyes flash with animated joy on her return—as he advanced in eager delight one step to meet her;—she would, as she saw all this, have completely forgotten everything but the delight—the rapture of again beholding him—she would have completely forgotten that she left a poor unhappy cousin weeping up stairs.

But, though Anne, as she entered, saw Mr. Temple turn anxiously round, and though he spoke to her the moment she drew near, and had evidently been watching for her return—yet she did not, on this account, forget her sorrow for Charlotte Daventry, nor did she feel the true heroine-delight as she descended the stairs, but wished most sincerely that she might

have been allowed to remain to comfort Charlotte, instead of returning to the drawing-room, even though Edward Temple was there.

However, on the morrow, Charlotte appeared with her usual cheerful, lively manner, and Mr. Temple hardly refrained from asking her whether the weight of gratitude was become more burdensome since the preceding evening? but he did refrain and turned to talk to Anne.

During the day, Lady Dowton was happy enough to engage his attention. The Greys and Charlotte Daventry were all out of the room, and Mr. Temple actually sat down by her, to the amazement of Mrs. Cunningham and the two Miss Cunninghams, who all three would have given the world to have been even spoken to by him. Edward Temple and Lady Dowton had a long conversation, and in such a low confidential tone of voice, that it was sometimes almost hushed into a whisper. What could it

have been about? Neither more nor less than Charlotte Daventry and the Greys.

“She plays most beautifully, I can assure you—but poor thing she never plays here.—No—that would not be quite allowed. It would interfere, you know. The Greys—I really am very fond of them.”

“Yes, I see,” said Mr. Temple.

“But you know they have their little failings,” continued Lady Dowton, “who has not? and perhaps, with regard to this poor girl—who is undoubtedly attached to them from gratitude—there is evidently a little jealousy.”

“Mr. Grey, I suppose?” said Mr. Temple.
“He and Miss Daventry would certainly clash.”

“Yes, exactly,” said Lady Dowton, not understanding, but going on. “There is a little jealousy, and Charlotte Daventry is not allowed by any of the family to do anything well. Her music—they all say, as you know, that she can-

not play at all, and does not like it; but the poor girl is passionately fond of it, and really plays beautifully."

"You have heard her?" said Mr. Temple.

"No, not exactly, but Miss Foley—"

"Miss Foley!" said he, in a different manner, and with a little start.

"Yes, Miss Foley was very sorry for her."—

"And she heard her play, Lady Downton?"

"Yes, often at my house," was the reply. "Often—and she is very fond of the poor girl, and very sorry for her. These little jealousies are very disagreeable in a family, Mr. Temple. You would scarcely suspect Anne Grey of such a thing—but a little sulkiness of temper, and this jealousy of others' accomplishments go together in her—and she looks so quiet, and is so kind in her manner—such a very gentle manner—and I dare say she *may* feel a little,—but still for a poor thing in

Charlotte Daventry's situation, it is hard to bear."

"Yes," said Mr. Temple. "Miss Grey certainly has all the appearance of a person with whom it would be difficult to live."

"Exactly," said Lady Dowton, thinking Mr. Temple, who was such a superior-minded person, must be right; "Exactly."

"You have often seen her sulky, I suppose, Lady Dowton, as you live so near, and have known her from a child?" said Edward Temple.

"No indeed," said Lady Dowton; "but my delicate health you know—" and she was sinking back in interesting languor. Mr. Temple saw it.

"Perhaps you have heard, Lady Dowton—"

Lady Dowton was roused, 'you have heard perhaps,' betokened something to be heard.

"Perhaps you have heard the story about Mr. Grey and the poodle dog?"

“No, indeed! never!” said Lady Dowton, in an animated voice. “No, indeed.”

“Ah, well I thought you had known it. It is highly to Mr. Grey’s credit, I assure you, and to Miss Grey’s too. It proves most completely that the Greys are everything most kind and attentive to Miss Daventry, and that Miss Anne Grey has not the smallest particle of sulkiness or jealousy. I cannot tell you the story. I thought, as a friend of the family, you might have known it, otherwise I would not have named it. It was told me in confidence, and I must ask Lady Dowton, as a favour, that you do not mention the poodle dog—*that* is the particular thing which must not be named—besides which you perceive that to those who do not know the whole story, it would sound ridiculous. Of course the fact may be mentioned that there are well-grounded proofs that the Greys are free from all jealousy and want

of kindness to Miss Daventry; and that Miss Anne Grey is not sulky—but has the sweetest temper in Christendom. *This* you must be at liberty to repeat, and there can be no harm in adding the very strong grounds of your own personal experience of her disposition. In short these reports are stale now. This of the poodle dog is the new version. I wish I was at liberty to relate the whole to you. But the inference is sufficient.”

“Well indeed,” said Lady Dowton, “I always said and thought it must be so. I felt so sure Anne Grey was the sweetest tempered being in the world. I never had seen the slightest symptom of sulkiness or jealousy in her, though I have known her all my life; and towards Charlotte Daventry, in particular, I have always seen every mark of consideration.”

“You must take care to let the world know this Lady Dowton for I can assure you, you have

been named as circulating a story that was not quite correct. People were rather amused—excuse my saying so—you know what I mean.”

“ Oh certainly,” said her ladyship, colouring and biting her lip.

“ People were rather amused,” he continued, “ at your having been duped by such a story. With all your opportunities of judging for yourself, that you should have been so completely deceived.”

“ Ah ! thank you, Mr. Temple, you are very kind. Indeed I hated to think such a thing was true. Indeed I never believed it, and it was rather unjust to suppose I did.”

“ Very unjust indeed,” rejoined he. “ But the world you know, Lady Downton—the world is so scandalous ! and you must take care and refute all that it believed you to have said. But I quite forgot that I was to walk with Mr. Grey,” said he, jumping up. “ I have been so

agreeably led into forgetfulness," — bowing to Lady Dowton, and Lady Dowton never felt quite so happy before as at such a compliment from Mr. Temple; and he left the room.

"Yes! bravo Mr. Temple," said he to himself. "You are a clever fellow, let the world say what it will. But I must know more! If Miss Foley said true, and she never would say what was not true! But Lady Dowton repeated it. Pshaw! why believe it for a moment? but it shall be proved, now or presently."

"Mr. Grey," said he, approaching Mr. Grey, "I have been looking every where for you. Lady Dowton's agreeableness," — he smiled, and Mr. Grey smiled, — "Lady Dowton's agreeableness must be my excuse."

"A very lame one I fear," said Mr. Grey.

"Ah! well, never mind. Excuses are always good for nothing — never supposed to be worth anything. There would be no such word in our language if they were."

That evening Edward Temple devoted himself to Charlotte Daventry. He shewed less attention than usual to her cousin. Yes, he was very attentive to Charlotte, and Anne thought there was something very *empressée* in his manner to her. Charlotte never looked so well, so nearly beautiful. Nay, Anne thought there was something so much superior even to beauty in her appearance.

“Can it be?” thought she. “He spoke very strangely about her; he expresses such interest, and—” she thought for a moment— “and yet at times he speaks almost slightly of her. Perhaps he wishes to blind me by his manner.” She felt a little twinge, and tried, as she had done the first evening of his arrival at Weston, not to care about it, and not to look at Charlotte and him.

It was true that his manner was peculiarly attentive to Charlotte Daventry. A vain girl

might even have read something more in it ; but Charlotte Daventry we know was not vain. She believed he loved her cousin, and this must have saved her from any flattering illusions ; though she might well have been justified for entertaining such. Yes—we grieve to say it ! Edward Temple, by his manner that evening, laid himself open to the charge of fickleness. But do not let us censure him too hastily. We will not blame him yet ; we are only sorry that Anne Grey should have felt that it was so necessary for her peace of mind not to look that way oftener than she could avoid.

“ He is gained !” said Charlotte Daventry to herself in her own room, as her eyes sparkled with triumph and delight. “ He is gained !—that tear—that meek, touching rebuke !—that little self-denying retirement, have effected what there was cause to despair of ! Yes—it was but a chance ! It required the nicest exercise of skill

—but it has succeeded. Anne Grey, — sigh, blush and pine !” She smiled proudly, and then she sighed again with a softer emotion.

“What a charm there is in music !” said Edward Temple to Charlotte Daventry, the next morning after listening to a song of Anne’s.

Charlotte looked at him, and saw the enthusiasm of his admiration beaming in his countenance. Was it the song or the singer? Music or the performer which called forth that enthusiasm? the next minute was calculated to satisfy any one that although it was the song, and not the singer—music, and not the performer, which caused the enthusiasm, it would be easy for the song and the music to transfer the enthusiasm to the singer and the performer.

“Music is quite a passion with me,” said he.
“I could love any one let them be old and ugly and disagreeable as—what shall I say, Miss Daventry?—the oldest and ugliest and most

disagreeable person you know—I could love them with all my heart if they played and sung well. My first question would be, if I were thinking of enquiring for a wife—is she a good musician? and that question satisfactorily answered, all the others would follow of course. She might have beauty, agreeableness—all those thousand and one charms every unmarried woman is possessed of as a matter of course. They would be pleasant additions, certainly; but I should care very little about them. Do not you agree with me? Do not you feel that you never could fall in love with a woman who could not charm you by her voice or her fingers. Ah! I forgot, you cannot fancy yourself in love with a woman at all—and a man! *we* only listen to music. We seldom give proof of our talent and souls for music but in listening,—I am sure you play and sing to perfection, Miss Daventry,” added he.

“What shall I say after hearing such an opinion on the subject,” said Charlotte, looking archly at him. “I will neither say yes, or no,” continued she, after pretending to think for a moment. “I *dare* not say no, and I *must* not say yes.”

“The only thing left for you then,” said he, “is to allow me to decide for myself—but, meantime, I will venture to say ‘Yes’ for you without any proof.”

“Thank you,” said Charlotte, laughing.

“You consent then,” said he. “You will let me hear you?”

“No—not now—perhaps some time: not now.”

She looked at Anne and Mrs. Grey, who were in the room; and said, with some confusion, and rather eagerly, “This is all nonsense. You know it was all nonsense, I was only in joke about my playing. You know, my Aunt and cousin will tell you I cannot play at

all. Yes indeed, Mr. Temple," getting anxious, as she saw him look incredulous. "Yes, indeed, if you will ask they will tell you—but I had rather you should not say anything about it."

"Your cousin and Mrs. Grey will say," said he, "but will you let me ask yourself? I know you cannot say what is not true?"

"Oh well! never mind," said Charlotte, hurriedly, and seeming really alarmed. "Never mind asking any one. You shall hear me some time—only not now. I never play," she added quickly, "before my cousin, or —, it is so difficult—so foolish for that—" she seemed confused—got up,—and, as if vexed and annoyed at herself, walked away to another part of the room, took up a book and, seating herself on a sofa, began to read very intently, whilst concealing her face with the book. Edward Temple smiled. "Pretty piece of acting! She will *not* play."

“How delightful it is,” said he, turning to a clever, entertaining Mrs. Fuller, who was of the party at Weston. “How delightful it is to have something left to the imagination! How convenient too, to have an imagination to leave anything to!”

“And this is apropos of *what*?” said Mrs. Fuller.

“That I leave to *your* imagination, Mrs. Fuller,” said he. “Do not believe, or *imagine* (I should say), that I invoked imagination for nothing.”

That next morning, Mr. Temple persuaded Charlotte Daventry to sit down to the piano-forte. No one but Mrs. Cunningham was in the room, and Mrs. Cunningham did not know one tune from another.

Charlotte Daventry touched the instrument. Could any one doubt her powers of performance? Edward Temple started. She

went on ! How spirited ! How graceful ! How expressive ! Could it be ?—She stopped and blushed, as she saw the effect produced by her performance.

“ One more,” said Edward Temple, beseechingly. “ Pray do not stop !”

She hesitated a moment, and then once more her hands were on the instrument. She began softly, but her enthusiasm led her on. Her soul was in the music. She played the air of a song. It was a beautiful air—a plaintive, touching air.

“ Oh ! will you not sing it ?” said he ; and Charlotte forgot her alarm, and sung. There was an impassioned richness in her voice—in her manner of singing—such as enchained, and captivated the senses of the listener. It was a style of singing unlike the generality of that which is heard in private society. It was a style which perhaps we should be unwilling to

hear, beautiful, though it was, from a sister, a daughter, or a wife.

Edward Temple was surprised, and captivated with it, spite of himself. He listened in breathless fascination, as she continued, and it was not till the voice was silent and the music ceased—not till the rich expressive burst of melody had died away, that he could think who it was that was singing, and what was the tale that singing told—not till she ceased could he say to himself, “Is it possible? Is Anne Grey deceitful?”

Charlotte Daventry stopped; she saw his eyes fixed on her with inquisitive eagerness;—saw that Mrs. Cunningham had left the room: all her former alarm returned. She closed the instrument hastily—said, “How foolish—how childish!” and, as Mr. Temple began to express his lively admiration of her perform-

ance—his wonder she had not performed before—she stopped him :

“ Mr. Temple, I am going to ask a favour. You will think me very strange”—and she blushed, and seemed as if she felt with natural modesty, the awkwardness of what she was about to say. “ You will think me very strange, or weak—or—but I must pay the penalty of my folly”—she blushed more deeply. “ I am going to ask a favour. I believe that no gentleman,” she laid some slight stress on the word—“ would refuse to grant it, or would endeavour to pry into my reason for asking it. I have confidence in your generosity, Mr. Temple,” she continued, seriously. “ I am ashamed to have obliged myself to put it to the test—to make myself appear in so ridiculous a light. The favour I have to ask is that you will not mention to any one having heard me play. It is a trifle to ask,” she said, smiling

“and probably you will wonder, or laugh at the seriousness of my manner. But it cannot be helped!—Will you grant my request?”

“Yes, certainly,” said he. “I do not understand it, but you need not be afraid on that account, that I shall treat it lightly.”

“Thank you! thank you!” said Charlotte Daventry, looking at him with modest gratitude.

Edward Temple was surprised, and as she quietly walked out of the room, he felt more completely puzzled than he had allowed himself to be for some time. “I would give a good deal, she had played like a miss at a boarding school,” said he, to himself.

“Not proposed yet!” said Charlotte, to Anne, as they sat together before dressing time in Anne’s room. “Not proposed yet! But, dear Anne, why does he not? He is certainly enough in love!”

“Nay, Charlotte, do not say that. I am not in the least surprised at his not proposing. I do not suppose he has any idea of doing so. No more idea of proposing to me than to you.”

“Ah! but when he talked to me so much about you,” said Charlotte, not noticing Anne’s confused manner as she uttered the last words; “and when he is so constantly shewing his preference for you, I see a very good reason for being surprised that he has not yet proposed.”

“To tell you the truth, Charlotte,” observed Anne, “I am afraid to think about it. I have at last discovered my own weakness, and I fear I may have cause to regret that I ever gave way to it. I do not deny that Mr. Temple has certainly shewn me great attention—his manner has at times—but still,” said she, after a slight pause, “he may not mean anything.”

He is a man of the world. I am so unused to the manners of the world, that I may be deceived by a manner which would be looked on as meaning nothing to those who are accustomed to it."

"Nay, Anne, excuse me for laughing at such a serious, pretty, modest speech," said Charlotte, gaily; "but I must hope that Mr. Temple does not accustom many of the young ladies of his acquaintance to such a manner and such attentions, as those he bestows on you. No, no! I am no judge of the manners of the world, but even I can judge so far as this—that no man *of* the world, or *not* of the world can pay such attentions to any woman, as Mr. Temple does to you, without meaning something, or its being evident he *ought* to mean something by them."

"You are a good comforter and flatterer," said Anne. "But there is Watson come to put

a stop to the chance of my being laughed at or flattered any more ;” and Anne turned with a sigh to the contemplation of the gown in Watson’s hand, and the duties of the toilette, and her sigh might be supposed to arise from a reflection on the vanities of life. No one could tell whether she sighed because she saw an image of vanity in a pretty gown, and a smart lady’s-maid, or because she did not see very clearly whether the attentions of a man of the world meant the same thing as those of other men.

Mr. Temple’s visit at Weston was at length at an end, and if Anne ever asked herself that question, she could never satisfactorily reply to it. Mr. Temple left Weston ; and, if he had not been a man of the world, Anne would have said he left it with a heart not untouched : he left Weston with evident regret, and even Anne Grey, diffident as she was, would have

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been forced to believe, had he not been a man of the world, that that regret was caused by bidding her adieu.

She found the first days after his departure hang very heavy. She had to scold herself, to be really very angry with herself, to form many very good resolutions, more excellent each time they were broken. She firmly resolved never to think of Mr. Temple; steadily determined not to let him engross too much of her thoughts; but Anne felt guilty of being in love! She owned to herself that she liked Mr. Temple,—that the fact of his liking her or not was no longer one of indifference to her. She certainly might, with very little vanity, believe that he liked her. He had shewn every symptom of it. He had said everything to make her suppose so. The only reason for doubting it was the very simple and self-evident fact of his being Edward Temple! It seems strange that

this, of which no one could be ignorant, should be a reason for doubting—yet so it was! ‘Edward Temple,’ stood in Anne’s mind for something so superior to all others that her diffidence took alarm when she thought that it was he whom she believed capable of entertaining a preference for her. His manner to her, said ‘I love you, Anne Grey;’ but his name, his reputation in the world,—in Anne’s own estimation,—his talents,—all that was expressed and understood by those words, ‘Edward Temple’ said, you must be flattering yourself with false and presumptuous hopes.

It was thus the matter stood in Anne’s heart, and she felt guilty of being in love—positively *guilty*, for Anne Grey was not conceited; so she determined to think of him only as a motive to improvement. Improvement! for the sake of rendering herself worthy to be loved by him! Amiable deceit! Anne Grey,

you are a heroine after all ! Forget Edward Temple when you are more than perfect. Forget him when you think yourself perfect, and then Mr. Temple do not fear that you will ever be forgotten !

CHAPTER XVII.

LET any one, who can, decide whether it is more a proof of being amiable to love or to be loved? We all have said of many of our acquaintance, they must be amiable for they are so much loved; and we all have said of many others, they must be amiable for they love so warmly. In both there seems a proof of merit, but who shall decide which is the greater? Still more, who can decide which is most agreeable?

Perhaps they are closely united; for to be loved and not to love! where is the charm of

that? and to love and not to be loved!—Oh! who may not guess or know that misery? To love, with the fond clinging love of a child, and to meet a parent's cold and careless eye! To love with the warmth and sympathy of a sister, and to meet no tenderness, no confidence in return! To love with a parent's watchful, anxious, undying love, and to meet ingratitude, carelessness, contempt! To love with a woman's fond, devoted, trembling, constant love, and to read in the look and tone of him beloved, that worse than serpent's sting—indifference! To love and to be loved are indeed intimately blended; the pleasure of one consists in the pleasure of the other; but not so the merit. The merit of the one consists perhaps in the absence of the other. It is easy to love when we are loved; but where there is coldness and indifference to meet our affection—*then* to love is indeed a merit

Anne's affection for Charlotte had very much increased of late. She had always pitied and wished to love her ; but now she had no longer occasion to think of doing so as a duty. She really regarded her with sincere affection. She saw with pleasure the gradual improvement in her mind and manners. She was no longer the awkward, ignorant, wondering girl, whose warm affections and lively intellectual powers had lain half dormant for want of culture. She had learnt to think as well as to feel. She had learnt, or rather she was beginning to learn, to sometimes deliberate before she acted or spoke. She could not always quite controul her lively imagination, her warm impetuous feelings ; but still there was *some* controul ; before, there had been none.

Anne saw how much she must have been neglected from the rapid improvement she made. She was astonished at the powers of her

mind as they were gradually developed, and still more charmed with the simplicity, the modesty, the naïveté, and ingenuousness of feeling, manner, and sentiment allied to such powers. Charlotte Daventry was the most teachable person that ever existed. She was both eager and able to learn. She felt her own ignorance, and she seemed grateful to any who would give her instruction. She was only too desponding and diffident of her own abilities. She looked up to her cousins as immeasurably superior to herself, and if Anne had been vain, she might easily have been flattered by Charlotte Daventry's admiration of her talents and attainments. As it was, she only thought that Charlotte's warm affection made her considerably overrate her merits, and whilst her vanity was unflattered, her heart was touched, and she loved Charlotte the better, for the warmth of attachment which her flattering view of her character displayed.

She was indeed an object of the most heart-felt interest to Anne ; and her pity, her interest and affection were daily encreased as she saw what Charlotte might have been, but for the mismanagement and neglect of a fond, but selfish and unamiable father. Since Sophy's marriage she had become more intimate with her real character than before, when Charlotte, with characteristic amiability, had hesitated to advance her claims on the regard and affection of either. Whilst the two sisters remained together, they were all-sufficient to each other. With the sensitive intelligence of a generous mind she probably feared to impair that intimate communion of thought and feeling which existed between them, and which the interference of a third person could not fail to interrupt.

Anne saw that Charlotte was still reserved and diffident about herself, and that, excepting

to those she really loved, and whom she felt really loved her, she had the same light, careless manner as heretofore. But to Anne she revealed her feelings; and, perhaps, without being aware that she had any stores of mind to unfold, she did gradually unfold them to Anne. Yet there was something that Anne could scarcely understand in her character. She was still wild and foolish at times, displaying strange bursts of emotion, and then almost heartless levity. She was always right and sensible when she had time to consider; but it seemed that, from the long want of controul, her impulses were often too strong for her reason: her mind, too uncultivated, at times run riot, and she indulged in folly, for which her more sober judgment must afterwards have reproved her. She was at one time like a child—at another like a woman of sense and judgment.

Anne watched her with almost painful in-

terest : her character seemed like a difficult enigma. Sometimes she believed that she had read it ; that she thoroughly understood it : and then some trifling circumstance occurred, and she was thrown completely wrong once more. The enigma was more dark than ever.

Anne felt that Charlotte confided every thought and feeling to her, and she gave her, in return, sincere confiding affection. No wonder Charlotte Daventry improved ! none but Anne Grey could be ignorant why she should be likely to do so. None but her could think so lightly of that sense and judgment which were given for her use ; given as the writer of valuable books gives his wisdom and his knowledge to the world : a free gift, to be used by all, and profited by—neither forced, nor bestowed against the will ; but freely and unreservedly ; to be looked to and consulted when inclination prompts, or necessity calls for their assistance ;

laying none under a sense of obligation ; but writing, as he could not but write, what was wisdom and knowledge. It was thus with the sense, the judgment, and good principles of Anne Grey. They lay in the book of her heart and mind ; and those who chose to read that book might read instruction there.

And did Charlotte Davenport read that book ? Did she turn the pages, and with anxious care, search for profit, and instruction, and riches to be found in them ? Yes, she did look into that book ! She searched with eager, watchful scrutiny. She read each page — pondered — read and read again. She knew that unpretending open book ; each line, and word and letter ; it was simple—easy to be read. Was it so easy to profit by it ? to apply the lessons inculcated there ? or was it more easy to turn those lessons to evil ? to turn them to their own and others' destruction ? The improvement in Charlotte Da-

ventry, which Anne watched with delight and interest, would have seemed to prove that she at least had read them aright, and that she had profited by her intimate knowledge of the heart and feelings and sentiments of Anne Grey.

Soon after the period of Mr. Temple's first visit to Weston, William Grey, who had been absent for about a fortnight, returned home.

William Grey was not apt to make confidences. He was not perhaps reserved in disposition. He did not keep facts and feelings to himself, because he thought it good policy to do so, but he seldom mentioned anything about his own feelings or affairs, because it was a trouble to do so, and he did not consider any one much worth taking the trouble for.

According to this sensible view of the use and advantages of unreserve, William Grey had never told any of his family that he had been in love with Jane Graham, and that he had been

vexed at hearing from Lady Dowton that she was going to be married. This however was really the case, but what could he have gained had he mentioned it? Only the bore of hearing them say “how sorry,” or “how glad” they were. They would not have prevented Jane Graham from falling in love with any other person, or have made her fall in love with him : so he said nothing about it, and this wise reserve obliges us to recapitulate for him all that otherwise might have been learned in the more agreeable mode of conversation.

The fact was he had met Miss Jane Graham in Cheshire about two years before, during a visit to some of his friends in that county. He admired her, and I suppose I may say she admired him—that is, by mutual consent they sat together, talked together, walked together, rode together, and made love together : in short it was a flirtation. When William Grey was safely

out of the house, he said to himself, "What a pretty girl Jane Graham is!" and when Jane Graham began to flirt with the next admirer that fell in her way, she said "He is not so agreeable as Mr. William Grey."

William Grey just thought enough of Jane Graham to make him consider Cheshire a very pleasant county, and he resolved to visit it again the next year, having seen her in town during the Spring. Jane Graham was still unmarried—still pretty—still agreeable, and still ready to flirt with William Grey; and at last, by dint of remaining several days in the same house together, by dint of riding together in the morning, and sitting together in the evening; by dint of William's listening to Jane's singing, and Jane's listening to the hints of her female friends that "Mr. Grey was certainly a great admirer of hers;" it so happened that William Grey and Jane Graham did fall in love with one another.

She was a pretty, lively, and accomplished girl, one of the acknowledged belles of the county, good-tempered, well-disposed, and, in the language of some of her admirers, had “plenty of spirit and no nonsense about her!” would have no idea of not taking her own part, yet not in the least masculine, and, though she believed that no girl could possibly be so foolish as to fall in love with any man who was not twice as much in love with her, still she thought it very possible to be in love, supposing the person for whom she was to entertain ‘la belle passion’ was sufficiently enamoured and agreeable, had a good fortune, and was approved of by all the county, as well as her father and mother.

William Grey left Cheshire all but the acknowledged lover of Jane Graham, and with a tolerably positive assurance on her part that whatever love he chose to bestow was reciprocated in the proper degree by her.

The next thing William heard of her was from Lady Dowton—that she was going to be married. His indignation at such a report for some time kept him *very sensibly* from making any effort to ascertain its truth. The papers were silent on the subject, and at last he felt a curiosity to visit Cheshire once more. He went; the story of Jane Graham was untrue—he proposed—was accepted—meant to write and tell his father every day, but every day delayed doing so—fortunately, as it happened, for it would have been a great deal of trouble for nothing.

For some days after his proposal, William thought himself very happy. But William was accustomed to consider self as the first object, and he could not exactly understand why a woman who was in love with him should expect to be more considered and attended to than him. He was careless—she was angry—

a quarrel ensued. It was made up once, and William, who really loved her, thought he had been to blame, and tried to be more attentive and think less of self.

But though Jane loved William, as she was a girl of spirit, she felt persuaded from his former carelessness that she ought to keep him in order, and make him properly attentive to her; consequently she became very exigeante and very tiresome—was ready to quarrel at the smallest appearance of negligence or indifference, though she might have known, by this time, that it was in appearance only. She tried William too much; he could not completely overcome his usual character; he thought she could not really love him, or she would not be so punctilious about trifles—he was hurt and offended: she thought it right to shew her dignity and he offended too. A more serious quarrel than the last ensued. To assert her independence

she began to flirt with an old admirer. William's indignation knew no bounds. His feelings were wounded. He declared that she could never have loved him, to be thus guilty of flirting with another person. All his good and bad feelings were roused. He really loved her, and she really loved him, but neither could give way—neither could confess that they were in the wrong; and they parted, proudly intimating to one another that the engagement must be considered at an end, and William Grey returned home, for the first time in his life, fairly out of spirits.

Anne quickly perceived it, and Charlotte Daventry, kind-hearted girl, no less quickly.

“Poor William is sadly out of spirits,” said she to Anne. “He is so cross, which is a sure sign.”

“He is certainly out of spirits,” said Anne.

“He is more sarcastic than usual in his

invective against our sex," rejoined Charlotte. "He never thought us such a set of simpletons before," continued she.

"I do not think William is a likely person to be in love," said Anne doubtfully.

"*Nous verrons !*" thought Charlotte Daventry, and she said, "Oh, no!" Anne was silent, and Charlotte Daventry formed a resolution and adhered to it.

In a few days William Grey entrusted his griefs to her. Charlotte's kind, considerate manner, and unobtrusive attention, won confidence even from him. Charlotte saved him the trouble of any effort to tell what he felt. It all came naturally. He really could not help telling her. In short he never before had had the same occasion to make a confidante : he never had suffered so much before. William Grey had a warm heart—he had strong affections, and if self had not interfered, he would

have been a particularly amiable person: had it not been for self, he would have been the kindest, warmest, most affectionate friend — the most constant and devoted lover. For a time, he suffered a great deal from Jane Graham's conduct towards him, but he found so much comfort in talking to Charlotte Daventry about the affair, that he almost began to forget why he wanted comforting. At length the papers reminded him.

One morning Mrs. Grey having duly looked at the newspaper, began by way of amusement to herself and others, a doubtful one, perhaps, to read a part of it aloud. "The lady of the Rev. James Richards of a son," "At the Rectory, Westwood, the lady of the Rev. Timothy Hopkins, of twins, a son and a daughter."

"Bless me! how people do go on!" interlarded Mrs. Grey.

"The lady of Josiah Parkins, of a daughter

still born." "By the Rev. Joseph Wood, Mark Anthony, eldest son of Mark Anthony Peter Giles, Esq., of Braywood, Co. Kent, to Sarah Amelia Jane, eldest daughter of John Jones, Esq., of Rose-bower Cottage near Bristol."

"Oh, yes! marriages, I see," observed Mrs. Grey again. "On Wednesday last at St. George's, Hanover Square, Frederic John Goldby, Esq., eldest son of Sir Frederic John Goldby, Bart., to Jane Caroline, second daughter of Arthur Graham, Esq." William suddenly got up and left the room.

"Is any thing the matter with William?" said Mr. Grey.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Grey.

"Oh! dear no," said Charlotte, "I dare say not. I know he was going to look at a dog that was coming for him this morning, and I dare say, he only just remembered it." Mr. Grey resumed his book. Anne was not in the

room. Mrs. Grey finished the list of marriages and hurried through the deaths. These she read to herself, except when she came to that of a very old friend, and then, in an animated voice, as if cheered and excited by the intelligence, she read it aloud for the benefit of Mr. Grey.

“ Ah ! only think ! I have known him as long as I have known anything ; but I have not seen him these twenty years. Well, my dear, perhaps you will like to look at the paper,” laying it near Mr. Grey. “ That’s a very amusing paper, Mr. Grey—always full of news :” and Mrs. Grey settled herself, more comfortably than usual, to her work.

Charlotte shortly after left the room. She found William in his study. He was pacing backwards and forwards. He stopped as she entered—he expected to see her.

“ Did you hear it ?” said he, “ Oh ! I am

a miserable fellow ! It was too bad—too cold—too heartless !—so soon !” and William leaned against the mantel-piece and shaded his face to conceal his emotion. “Well, it is all over now !” said he, rousing himself, after some minutes’ silence. “It can’t be helped, and I have had a good escape :—but Jane Graham ! Can it be—so heartless—so deceitful !—I did not think it ! Aye, you pity me, Charlotte,” said he, looking at her whilst the tear glistened in his eye. “You are very kind to me, Charlotte. I knew you would feel for me ;” and Charlotte shewed by her kind, compassionate voice and manner, that she did so.

“I was obliged to run away, to prevent their seeing my distress,” continued William, “when my mother read out that odious paragraph, spelling it word by word ; and I knew the next thing would be, “You know Miss Graham, do not you, William ?” so I got away

before it came to that! But they did not perceive, I hope—they did not remark anything?" looking at Charlotte.

"Oh! my uncle said something, but I soon turned it off—I said, I thought you were gone to look at a dog, and he was satisfied."

"Aye, thank you—you are a good soul, Charlotte: you never tattle. I would not have all the world knowing this—and all of them coming and plaguing one to death with their pity, or their ill-natured remarks. No, not even one of my own family. It is ten to one if they did not run daggers through one every day by their blundering compassion. From Anne, to be sure, there is little danger of that: she is the least of a blunderer I ever saw. But one is enough—you know all—I would have told her, as I have told you, but she never asked me, and it is all as well! You know how to do one good, but I never should have told

you if you had not half found it out yourself, and saved me the trouble. You are a good girl, Charlotte—and God knows!” said he, remembering himself and Jane Graham ‘*that was*’ again; “God knows, I want comfort now!” and Charlotte administered the comfort so well, that in a short time he was again in danger of forgetting why he wanted comforting.

In short, William was not a sort of man to fret very long over the loss of a mistress whom he had loved ever so much. Had it interfered with his every-day comfort—had her being married to another involved the loss of his breakfast, dinner, or supper—the loss of his arm-chair, or the absence of the book he wanted to read; had it made any one about him disobliging, or too silent, or too talkative, or too grave, or too gay—then William would never have recovered his disappointment—he would have worn the willow to this day, and

might have gone into an atrophy, or a decline, or a nervous fever on the strength of it; but as Jane Graham's marriage did not materially interfere with the continuance of all his personal comforts, his health was unimpaired. Had the affliction under which he suffered been a scolding, disagreeable wife, instead of the loss of a wife, he would never have got over it. That would have spoken forcibly to his feelings every day of his life. It would have been *bore interminable*, and William hated to be bored; but the loss of the affections of a girl with whom he was in love was a very different thing, and he soon forgot to care much whether Jane Graham were married or single.

However he did not so easily forget Charlotte Daventry's kindness. She had begun by comforting him when he was unhappy. He now found that she was just as essential to his comfort when he was happy.

He liked her, and not unfrequently said to Anne, "What a nice girl Charlotte was," and "how amazingly she was improved." He often asked Anne whether she did not think Charlotte looked exceedingly handsome. He sometimes asked her whether she had ever made a simpleton of herself and been in love. He often said to Anne, "You don't do that half so well as Charlotte does," when others might have seen but little difference, and that little in Anne's favour.

In short, (is any one prepared for what is to follow?) William Grey at the end of a few weeks after Jane Graham's marriage found himself in the pleasant, or unpleasant, condition of falling in love, and with no other than his good cousin Charlotte Daventry. Every one will say "Nothing more natural! more common-place!" for love, or hate, is a necessary consequence of that blessed tie of cousin-

hood, where from childhood we have not been brought up together; cutting teeth, holiday visits, and school-boy jokes, may prove unfailing safeguards; but William Grey had none of these, and he chose, or rather he did not choose, for he could not help it, he *chanced* to fix upon love.

He became seriously in love with Charlotte Daventry. Anne saw the rise of the passion. She saw Charlotte totally unconscious of it—feeling and speaking of William with fond affection, but with a sister's love.

No! Charlotte Daventry was certainly not in love, nor the least aware that William Grey was in love with her. There was no one she was so fond of as William, no one for whom she had such ready smiles, but alas! she had always smiles—she had no frowns—acme of a lover's wishes—frowns! She had no grave looks, no half averted eyes, no blushes. No!

William Grey, unhappy man ! could not call a single frown his own, and he was in despair. He was desperately in love : Charlotte Daven-try had a power over his heart that no other woman had ever yet attained. Anne saw with sorrow the real state of the case, but was unwilling to reveal to Charlotte, who remained in happy ignorance, the real nature of William's feelings towards her. Anne loved her the better for it : still, it was very vexatious, for Charlotte unconsciously did all she could to encrease his passion. *Unconsciously*, for it was merely by her shew of fondness, of sisterly affection and attention to William, and the unreserved display of all the graces and charms of her mind and heart.

Oh, it was a sad thing ! a provoking thing ! It would have given her such real pleasure, such delight, to have William and Charlotte so fond of one another, if there had not been

love in the case! but she knew that love could not be a happy one; she thought it unlikely that Charlotte should return his passion, and it would never be approved by her parents. It was very annoying: Anne sighed over it very often, when she saw poor William looking so miserable, and jealous, and so much in love; and Charlotte looking so innocent, and fascinating, and smiling.

What was to be done? Anne did not know. She was very sorry, but, indeed, it could not be helped.

It could not be helped! Comfortable words! The Italian “*dolce far niente*” expresses but the counterpart of the comfortable quiescence conveyed in those English words “It can’t be helped.” How many idle hearts have been lulled into repose, after a gentle shove from the spirit of activity and trouble, by those soothing words “It can’t be helped!” How many a

twinging conscience touched by the troublesome spirit of remorse, as it views the poor victim hurrying on to the destruction that might have been averted, is soothed by that quieting sentence "It can't be helped!" How many an awkward footman who throws the contents of the soup-plate on the silky coat of the favourite lap-dog, consoles himself with those words, "It can't be helped!" How many a pretty coquette, whose bright eyes have caused a duel and loss of limb to some unfortunate hero, consoles herself with those cheering words "It can't be helped!" How many—but who does not know how many—who has not said to himself in an indolent, a self-consoling, or a self-upbraiding mood, with a comfortable shrug, a conscience-quieting pull of the chair to the cheering vicinity of the fire—who has not said to himself at such moments "It can't be helped?"

What sensible man, or woman, will fret about that which cannot be helped? Whether it might have been helped is not the question. It cannot, or we wish to believe it cannot be helped now, and we bless our English ingenuity for devising such a balm to wounded consciences or hearts as those few, simple, inelegant words. So Anne Grey tried to comfort herself, as all the world have comforted themselves before her, by saying "It can't be helped!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALL the party from Weston were invited to Chatterton, and Anne thought with pleasure of the visit. It is difficult to say what pleasure means. Pleasure bears a different sense to every different person. Pleasure to a country Miss just 'come out,' means 'a race ball, and so many partners that she is danced till she can hardly stand.' Pleasure to an aspirant after fashion means 'a card for Devonshire House, or a nod from Lady ——.' Pleasure to a

school-boy means 'tying a string to his school-fellow's toe when he is asleep, and pulling it till he awakes him.' Pleasure to a man of an enquiring mind means 'a toad inside a stone, or a beetle running with its head off.' Pleasure to a man of taste means 'a first rate *artiste*, and a good dinner.' Pleasure to a labouring man means 'doing nothing.' Pleasure to a fine lady means 'having something to do to drive away the time.' Pleasure to an antiquarian means 'an illegible inscription.' Pleasure to a connoisseur means 'a dark, invisible, very fine picture.' Pleasure to a philosopher, a modern philosopher, a young philosopher, means 'liking nothing, despising every thing, and proving every one a simpleton except himself.' Pleasure to a beggar means 'a sovereign by mistake, instead of a shilling.' Pleasure to a sailor 'a fresh breeze and a sight of land.' Pleasure to the afflicted 'a tear.'

Pleasure to the sweetest of all tempers ‘the last word in an argument.’ Pleasure to the social, ‘the human face divine!’ Pleasure to the morose, ‘I shan’t see a soul for the next six months.’ Pleasure to an author ‘the last page of his manuscript—bliss inexpressible—‘Finis.’ Pleasure to all, to every one in their own way, and that way a different one.

How then define pleasure? It is indefinable! Who can say where it is? what it is? A whole college of wise men will not define it. They all may say, ‘I am pleased,’ ‘I have been pleased;’ but alas! their pleasure is not the same as others’ pleasure. “Is *that* pleasure?” the ninety and nine say to the one exception, “*That* is not pleasure;” and the ninety and nine all say what pleasure is; and the ninety and nine all hold up their hands in astonishment at the pleasure of the other ninety and eight. In the multitude of hearts, and souls, and feelings, in

the world, there are not two hearts, and souls, and feelings, which will confess pleasure to be one and the same thing. There may be broad resemblances, but there are shades of difference in all.

What then was Anne Grey's pleasure? How dare we speak of it! write of it! It is a dangerous word. If it even existed, how momentary! how passing! before it is yet well written—before the ink is dry—it is vanished! Like the lightning's flash, or the rainbow's tints, or the April shower, or the infant's tear, or the meteor in the sky, or the bubble in the stream—it is gone! What then were the ingredients of pleasure held out to Anne Grey in a visit to Chatterton? She did not dislike Mrs. Foley, she was anxious to be liked by Miss Foley, and she already liked Mr. George Foley; and more than all these, she was not sorry to leave home on account of William and Charlotte, as she

hoped some little change might be of advantage to them. These were her prospects of pleasure in a visit to Chatterton. Perhaps they implied rather more negative, than positive enjoyment; and this alas! is too often the meaning of the term. It is pleasure to escape from pain.

Anne then looked forward with pleasure to the visit to Chatterton, for she had no great faith in William's constancy, when less boldly defended by circumstances than in the present instance. Circumstances now had befriended it: like the warm and delicate bed of cotton wool, guarding the brittle trinket which safely travels through the jars and tumults of the road, enveloped in its nurturing and concealing folds, circumstances had guarded William Grey's constancy from the chance of injury.

Anne hoped the visit to Chatterton might give the wished for collision. Some very

pretty face, she hoped might there be seen, or some more languishing softness than Charlotte's—but no! that would not do for William. It must be some pretty, lively, clever person. Anne had her exactly in her mind. Isabella Foley was too quiet, and a little too sentimental. William certainly liked her—he *endured* her, and never left his comfortable chair when she went near. Still Anne feared she would not do, and she anxiously looked round the drawing-room at Chatterton, the first evening, to see if there was any one who might do better.

Yes, exactly! the very beau ideal of Anne's imagination was there! A Miss Ferrars, who was very pretty, lively and sensible. A girl whom every one knew, and William had heard of, but never before seen; he had once said, 'I should like to know that girl;' 'I am sure I should like her.' Anne's eyes brightened as she

perceived her. She glanced at William as Miss Ferrars' name was mentioned, within his hearing. But no! William was eagerly watching Charlotte Daventry.

Charlotte was seated at a table; Frank Crawford, who had returned to Chatterton that morning, was standing by her, half leaning over her chair; and Charlotte was half smiling; one moment throwing up her large expressive eyes at him, filled with intelligence and animation, then letting them fall again, as the blush slightly tinged her face. It was radiant animation—it was pretty, touching confusion. William Grey *might* hear Miss Ferrars' name; he *might* be aware that she was in the room, but Anne saw it was of no importance to him if he did. She turned away with a sigh. She feared that the visit to Chatterton from which she hoped so much would be worse than useless; for there was Charlotte Daventry with a

lover, to excite William's jealousy, and thus keep up his passion for her.

Anne wondered, with even a little vexation, what could have made Frank Crawford come to Chatterton so very soon again. To be sure it was tolerably evident why he had. His admiration for Charlotte could scarcely be unobserved. Charlotte herself was partly aware of it. She had mentioned it to Anne—said he was agreeable, but a sort of person no woman would ever think of marrying, should he even be inclined to put her thoughts in that way to the test; she liked talking to him, and she should go on talking to him.

Anne said, "For shame, Charlotte! Don't you know you are encouraging him by that; that you are indulging a little spirit of flirtation?"

"Oh, no indeed!" said Charlotte: "it would seem absurd that I should give up talking to

him, if you knew how very little there is in it! It would be giving him encouragement, to change my manner. But I will try not to talk *very* much to him. You shall see, when we go to Chatterton, Anne. But somehow, I do not know how—I always do what is natural. If I am inclined to talk to any one, I never think about it. I cannot feel all those reserves. I know I should be looking awkward, and constrained all day, if I thought about my manner.”

“ Well then,” said Anne, “ do not think about it, Charlotte dear. I believe you are right, and never was there a girl with less of the spirit of coquetry than you.”

“ Very well, then I will not think about Mr. Frank Crawford,” said Charlotte. “ I will just talk to him if he talks to me, or if I happen to sit near him, or if I happen to think of anything I wished to say to him. I am glad

you say it does not signify, because I know I should have felt so awkward when he spoke to me, if I had fancied I ought not to talk to him."

"Yes, that would never have done," said Anne, "so do not 'fash' yourself about Mr. Frank Crawford," added she laughing. "Let him take his chance, he is pretty well able to take care of himself."

"Yes, indeed!" said Charlotte, joining in her laugh; and she darted out of the room humming the air of a song.

"Happy girl!" thought Anne. "I never saw any one so free from nonsense and affectation. I do not wonder at William's liking her!"

In vain was Miss Ferrars everything that was agreeable during that visit. William would not see or feel it. He said she was—he believed, he knew that she was 'a very nice

girl'—'very agreeable'—but it was evident that he knew nothing about it. He was intent on Charlotte Daventry. He was very low—very jealous of Frank Crawford.' "He hated the fellow!" and he said so once before Charlotte.

"Hate Mr. Crawford!" said she, with a look of surprise. "My dear William!"

William coloured up. There was a mixture of feelings about the "Hate Frank Crawford," and the "My dear William;" but the "Hate Frank Crawford," predominated.

"Nay, you need not tell me *you* do not hate him," said he pettishly, and he got up and walked out of the room.

Charlotte Daventry was seated with her back towards Anne, and her eyes followed William. She smiled as the door closed—it was a bright triumphant smile, but she turned to Anne with a vexed, sorrowful look.

"What is the matter with William, Anne?"

“ I don’t know,” said Anne. She *did* know, and perhaps she should not have said she did not ; but ‘ I don’t know ’ is easily said, and means nothing.

“ Well, nor I,” said Charlotte, “ nor why he hates Mr. Crawford.”

“ Oh ! but I do !” said she, after a pause. Anne started.

“ But I do ! Mr. Foley said Frank Crawford had killed more birds on the moors last year than William. He said he was a better shot. I don’t understand these things, but I remember William looked angry at the time, and that’s it ! so it is !” and Charlotte, with a satisfied, merry air, ran off to look for a book of drawings that Mrs. Foley wanted to see, leaving Anne to be annoyed and to think by herself.

“ Jealous of Frank Crawford’s address ! of Frank Crawford’s success ! Yes, indeed,” said Charlotte Daventry to herself, with a bright

smile, as she found the book she wanted. "Jealous of his success in something more important than the death of a bird! Not less light and airy, and difficult to attain—not less ready to fly away than the poor little downy bird, is the possession of which he is jealous. No! light, deluding, fluttering thing! 'Tis this you are jealous of! The pretty phantom—the pretty nothing, a woman's love! It may be yours—theirs—any one's. It is *worth* having."

Charlotte Daventry walked off with her book, with a light and bounding step: she went to look for Mrs. Foley in her morning sitting-room.

"All gone but you, Mr. Crawford!" said she, as she entered the room, and saw no one but Frank Crawford sitting there. "All gone but you!" as she shut the door and seated herself on the low chair by the fire-side.

"Yes, and if you had known it, I suppose I

should not have been honoured by your company," said Frank Crawford, in a slight tone of pique, getting up and placing himself near her.

"That is a very pretty, indignant tone, Mr. Crawford. It is a pity you do not reserve it for Miss Ferrars, or your cousin," said she, with an arch smile.

"I wish to heaven!"—began Frank Crawford with vehemence.

"Do not wish any thing to heaven, Mr. Crawford, in so loud a voice," said Charlotte interrupting him. "Moreover, do not wish any thing to heaven, till you know what you have to wish for."

She paused — her eyes were turned half-reproachfully, half sadly, towards him for an instant, then cast on the ground. Frank Crawford started up, and came and leant over the back of her chair.

Charlotte looked at him, — one short look ;

then averting her face to conceal the blush which was stealing over it, she half covered it with one hand, and extended the other towards him.

Crawford seized the hand, and she allowed it to be retained for a few minutes ; but then, as he fondly urged its detention, she, with more firmness, drew it away, and said, in a gentle voice, "This is folly, Mr. Crawford—but I will excuse it. I have but too much need !" and her eyes were once more averted ; she sighed, and added in a scarce audible voice : "but too much need, where the folly is mutual."

Low as that voice was, Frank Crawford heard its gentlest tones. He listened with rapture.

"You say it is mutual," said he, eagerly. "Now, have I any thing to fear—anything to wish, but for *one* thing?" and he intently gazed on her face. "Let me hope that I may claim

this hand," and he once more seized her hand ;
"let me hope I may claim it as my own. You have said, once at least, that the love was mutual."

Charlotte Daventry looked proudly towards him for a moment, and snatched away her hand.

"Do not torture me thus, Miss Daventry! Is there to be no end to this suspense? Will you never let me hope? Let me but look forward to the day when I may call you mine! Dispose of me as you will ; but say that you will acknowledge me as your lover!"—

"Mr. Crawford," said Charlotte, interrupting him, "you will make me afraid of ever being kind to you in future. You forget to whom you are speaking. Do you think that Charlotte Daventry is a woman to acknowledge any man for her lover! To be bound to any man, for a day—or for life!" She looked coldly towards him.

“No, no! I will not be bound; not even by the silken tie of *public* engagement—not even by the more airy bond of *private* engagement. I will not be bound to any man; and if I were, do you think it would be on so short a trial? Do you think, because, for these few short months, you have seemed, what it is so easy for any one to *seem*—that your reward is so soon to be gained? I will not bid you despair, Mr. Crawford——” she turned her eyes for a moment with all their touching tenderness towards him—

“No! time, perseverance—I will own that I may be won in time; but do not think that it may be the easy work of a day. That a few sighs, a few tender words, can so easily work the effect they do on most women. No, Mr. Crawford, you have deceived yourself. I am not one of the herd of credulous, simple girls to whom you have been accustomed. An easy

dupe to fond words, and sighs, and lovers' follies. I am not so easily won. I love my liberty. I am young. Yes, Mr. Crawford, I am young—some think I have attractions, though heaven knows what they are; and I am not going to throw away such advantages, real or imaginary, before the teens are well passed, in making the good, neglected, patient wife:—No! time and perseverance *may* work wonders. Yes, even on Charlotte Daventry, where”—she paused for a moment, “where there is already,” she turned with soft expressive eyes once more towards him, “where there is already much,” she paused again”—“to encourage hope, I would say. But—” and the low deep tenderness of her voice was changed—she resumed her lively tone, her lively look:—“Good-bye, Mr. Crawford,” said she, and quickly rising, walked out of the room.



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